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THE SPHERE

Vol. CLXIV No. 2142 — WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC — FEBRUARY 8 1941

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LONDON LULLABY

1. *I am a draughtsman in a "hush-hush" department. One night I got back to my digs to find I wasn't allowed in — there was a time-bomb near. Dead tired, I dragged myself to my cousin Jack's.*

2. *Jack's family were in their cellar shelter. He kept sitting up and smoking. His wife Mary kept making tea. And the children were restless. I slept but I didn't get much good out of my sleep.*

3. *Not very surprisingly I didn't feel too good in the morning and it took me over an hour to get to the office, standing the whole way, first in the long queue at the bus-stop and then on the bus itself.*

4. *I felt nervy and couldn't do my work as well as I should. I didn't blame the chief saying I wasn't exactly helping to win the war. "What shall I be like after months of this?" I wondered.*

5. *Johnson, at the next drawing board, said: "What you want, old boy, is 1st Group Sleep. There are 3 Sleep Groups and 1st Group Sleep is the kind we all need. You want to take Horlicks."*

6. *That night at Jack's we all had hot Horlicks, and we had it every night after that. The kids loved it and we all felt the good it was doing us. I wasn't even wakened by Jack's snoring!*

7. *I am a new man now — fitter than I've been for a long time. I don't mind the journey to the office and the chief says that if there were more like me — well, Hitler would throw in the towel!*

THERE ARE THREE SLEEP GROUPS

SCIENTISTS divide us into 1st, 2nd and 3rd Group Sleepers. The last groups are wakeful, can't get to sleep. Group No. 2 may sleep 8 or 9 hours, yet wake still feeling tired. Only Group 1 sleepers get the deep, refreshing, restorative sleep we need to-day.

A cup of hot Horlicks last thing at night will give you 1st Group Sleep. It will help you to take the second year of the war in your stride. Prices from 2/-; *the same as before the war.* At all chemists and grocers.

HORLICKS

"MY HEAD'S HAMMERING AWAY — be an angel and bring down the HOWARDS"

A headache calls for aspirin. With the more knowledgeable it calls for HOWARDS' Aspirin. One might argue that an aspirin tablet is an aspirin tablet all the world over—that on such a point there is no need to be specific. But a similar plea might be put forward for a whisky or a perfume or a cigar, if you judge a product by the nature of its ingredients rather than by their *quality*. Taking an analytical view of the matter, aspirins made by a firm which has specialized in medicinal products of the highest quality since the days of Marie Antoinette, are surely well worth asking for by *name*.

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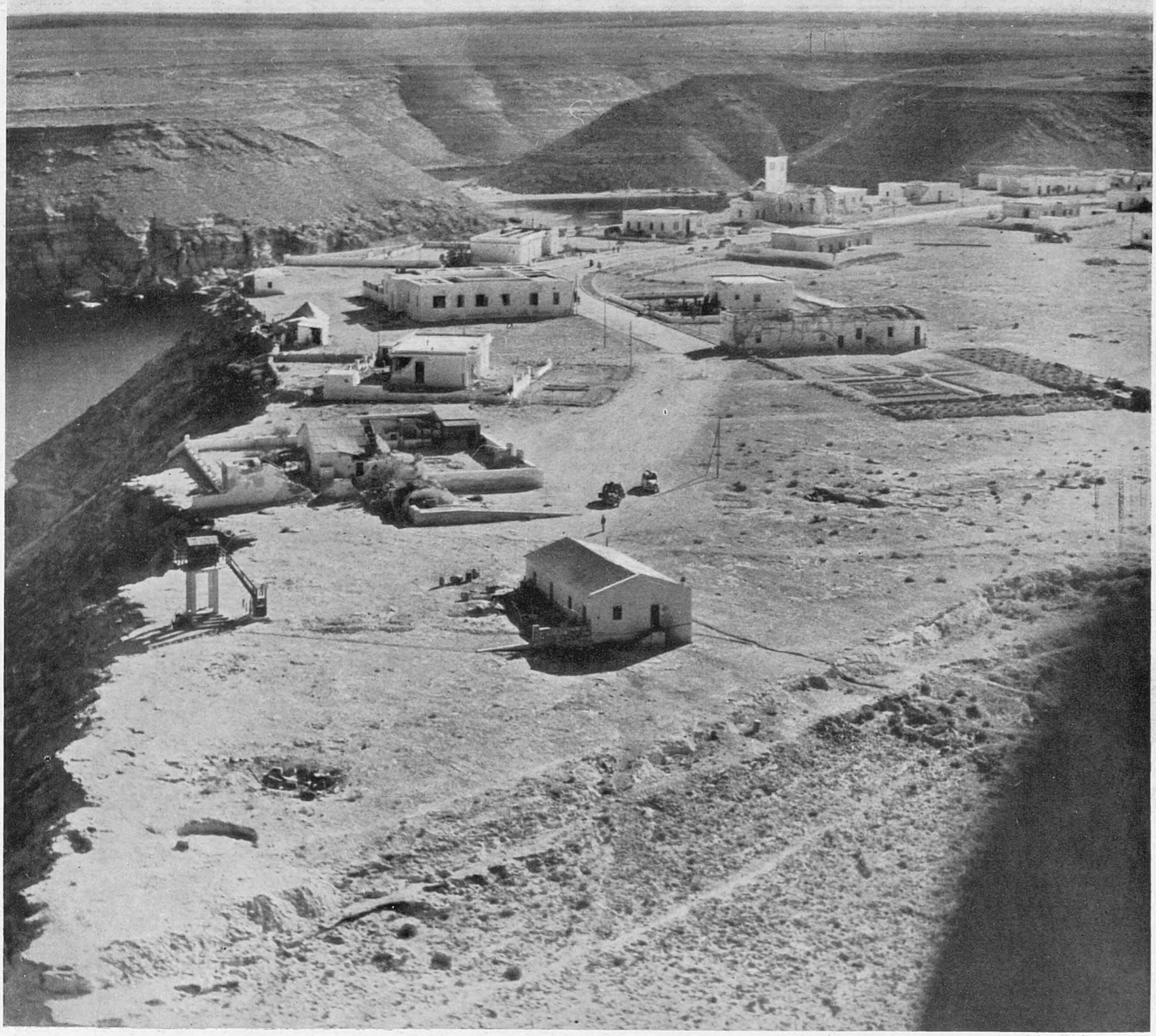
THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly
London, February 8, 1941



THE LAST PHASE AT BARDIA: THE DESERTED "BASTION OF FASCISM" JUST BEFORE OUR TROOPS ENTERED: MANY OF THE BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN BADLY DAMAGED BY NAVAL AND AIR ATTACKS AND BY BOMBARDMENT FROM THE LAND BATTERIES

Last week we presented to our readers a series of pictures showing how Bardia was taken by assault by British and Imperial forces in the Western Desert. This week we publish above (and on pp. 163—165) a further official series just released, which show the present condition of that important fortress and harbour which was described by the Italians themselves as the "Bastion of Fascism." It will be remembered that the surrender of Bardia took place on Sunday, January 5, when some 38,000 prisoners, as well as vast quantities of stores and armaments, were captured. Actually, when our troops entered, several fires were still burning merrily as a result of the Fleet's bombardment. "The place is not large," said one of the first correspondents to enter, "but what there is seems attractive. The houses are built of white stone and have spacious rooms. Many suffered severely from shellfire and bombing. Fascist headquarters were a scene of desolation. The officers' mess was ruined. A meal still lay on the tables." The picture reproduced here was taken from a British aircraft flying low over the town during the final operations at Bardia; it shows how the town lies on a flat plateau, with the cove forming a little harbour in the middle distance. The buildings seen here are all of military significance

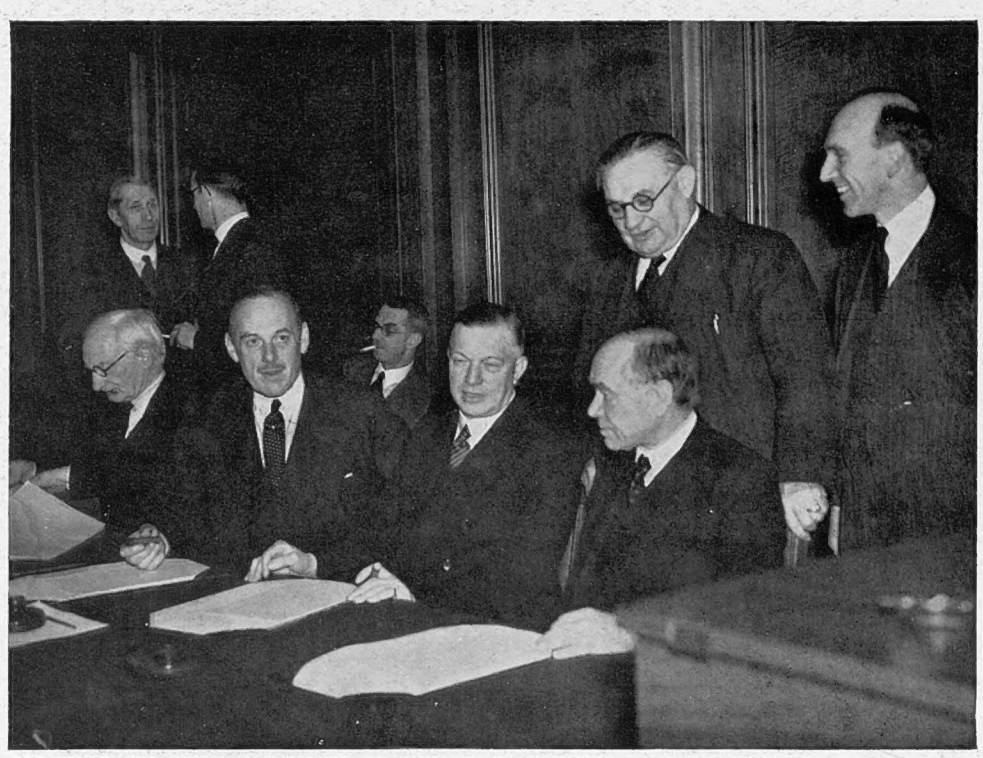
Postage—Inland, 2d.; Canada and Newfoundland, 1½d.; Elsewhere Abroad, 2d.

A WAR NEWSLETTER—No. 75

32-34, St. Bride Street, E.C.4.

AN EMPIRE DIES?

—The news from Africa continues to be good. From all fronts on which the Fascists are receding from their light-come-light-go Imperial possessions, the news tells of more and heavier blows delivered. From Libya, Eritrea, Abyssinia, Somaliland, the ice-cream is melting on the hot-plate. Authority seems at last to smile on the common man's wishful thinking that the Italian Empire is breaking up. But it is too early even to guess at what benefits may come to us from such a total collapse, if it come. If our prisoners rise to 200,000, with corresponding bags in guns and tanks, planes and ammunition, we assume the result must be to release many thousands of our troops and planes to operate in other spheres, not to add to release units of our Navy for urgent work elsewhere. But we know that such speculation is vain. It "all depends on that article" —Hitler. We know not today how or where he means to react. We know not if he will think it best to swallow, with the Duce, the mince-meat of the Imperial glory of Rome. And the mincing machine has as yet by no means finished its work—in Africa or in Albania.



THE DRIVE FOR MORE MAN-POWER IN SUPPORT OF BRITAIN'S WAR PROGRAMME: Man-power—and, for that matter, woman-power also—is the big problem of the moment. Mr. Ernest Bevin has great schemes afoot for harnessing every available man and woman to the great armaments chariot, so that Britain's biggest effort can be launched throughout the workshops of these islands. This picture was taken at the recent meeting of the British Employers' Confederation and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, when detailed proposals for the vast reorganisation of vital war production were outlined. Standing are Mr. Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, and Mr. Ralph Assheton, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister. Seated are Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production; Sir Andrew Duncan, Minister of Supply; and Mr. Lyttleton

DIPLOMACY'S SHAKE-OUT.

—These dark days have cleared the air a good deal in the field of diplomacy. The Foreign Ministers of European States are rapidly changing, and many of those who controlled Foreign Policy during the critical months past have moved on to other spheres of greater usefulness, or what-not. Lord Halifax is in Washington, Ciano has exchanged the word for the sword and, it may be, his air bombs will prove as dud as his diplomatic bombs. Csaky is dead, and Hungary will not necessarily feel his loss, though his works live after him, for the time being. Vichy has made a change, also. Remains Molotoff. Remains Ribbentrop—we know not for how long. He in his time has trumpeted many triumphs and dropped a dozen monster bombs. But their devastating effect has not always been apparent to sightseers when the fire and smoke of the explosions have cleared away. In short, it may be still true of this war, as of earlier wars, that, when the Armies are joined in battle, the work of the Chancelleries dies down and takes on a secondary and even a trivial role. For diplomacy, having achieved war, must usually twiddle its thumbs until it is over, and the seeds of the next war can be diplomatically sown under all the advantages of peace and the spirit of revenge, long pent-up and newly released. That is the observation of a cynical student of history. It is our proud, brave boast that such things shall never happen again. Meanwhile . . . there is general post in the Chancelleries.

THE LULL.

—After a winter remarkably free from mists, there came in mid-January a long period of mist which was without parallel in my experience. Days drew into weeks and weeks towards a month, without those "lucid" intervals which enable bombers to do their deadly work by night or even by day. We almost forgot the sounds of war. We did not for days on end hear the buzz of a single aeroplane, friendly or enemy. A deep peace lapped in the countryside day and night, and in the semi-darkness the great factories turned out undisturbed, in record quantities, the weapons of death and destruction. The war shifted to the sun-drenched fronts, and Italy staggered under the blows of Britain and Greece, while the northern combatant countries licked their wounds and repaired their shattered communications and worn-out machines. It was not a "jolly" *Mi Carême*. A grimmer section of Lenten sacrifice-to-come overshadowed our peace. Nature gave us no more than a breathing space, never let us forget war or its implications. It was but *reculer pour mieux sauter*, getting one's breath for the vital rounds. Yet, even so (such is man), these days of inaction and peace gave back to *words* some of their lost importance vis-a-vis deeds; the theorists came out again into the open; and men's thoughts turned back again—one longing, lingering look—to the shibboleths of the flabby past, party, possessions, private aims, and so forth; a *nostalgie de la boue*. An unhealthy, uneasy *Mi Carême*. We have not done with the Lenten sacrifice which heralds in the permanent renaissance of the Easter to come.

HOSPITALITY TO DOMINION TROOPS.

—The other day some Australian sailors on leave in our village came to tea. They were very young, well educated, keen and vital and healthy. We instantly found a conversational gambit—cricket—and we talked Test cricket unceasingly. When they went, we begged them to come again. They politely promised to look us up another time, but confessed that the rush of hospitality made two visits to any one house almost impossible. That was encouraging news. The organisation to entertain Dominion fighting men is clearly getting into its stride and, please God, we shall earn from the great Dominions none of the criticism which came out of the last war's organisation, good as it became at last. It is all a question of organisation and co-operation between services. And all organisation takes time, especially in sparsely inhabited areas, though the goodwill is abundant. Co-operation is vital. In this area some Maori soldiers have been "turned loose" for short leave and have "gone into the blue" in the expectation of finding a lodging for the night. Lodgings are hard to find and often these intelligent men have been found wandering at night in search of a barn in which to doss down, and they have been at last taken in by the H.G. night pickets. That fatal bungle is the result of lack of co-operation between the Military Command and the local organisation for hospitality concerned. It must be avoided at all costs. But this important organisation is daily improving as the weeks pass, and we are forging new links of Empire which will strengthen the Commonwealth in the years ahead.

PRIESTLEY REDUX.—

I welcomed the return of Mr. Priestley to our Sunday evening firesides, as I shall (I hope) soon welcome the chiff-chaff's return here. There is no doubt or wobble about him. He knows his mind and he sheds Yorkshire common sense and brotherhood around. But I regarded his first talk of a new series as in the light of a preface. Judged as anything else, that talk would put him in the category of a plumber who came to mend a broken pipe but forgot his tools, or the anarchist who (in the comic opera) dumped a time bomb among the chorus with the words: "This bomb is timed to go off at a certain time. I forget the time." For, indeed, if an arrangement of words cannot only shorten the war by years, but avoid most of the coming new wave of destruction of life and treasure, reason would say that the best brains in the country should now be devoted, not to forging instruments of death, but that life-giving, sanity-restoring form of words—our peace aims. (I understood that some of these brains are so engaged. But Mr. Priestley did not say so.) The *idea*, not altogether new, is still arresting and attractive. But the idea by itself is only a small part of the miracle of common sense which Mr. Priestley dreams of. It is the formula which is the vital clause, the operative clause, and Mr. Priestley said *good night* before he reached that vital clause. I cordially agree with him that it is ploughing the sand to go on reiterating that Britons are a race of heroes, and that Hitler and Co. are a gang of thugs, even super-thugs. I agree that we cannot permanently stem an outbreak of typhoid by treating the patients, without bothering to treat the bad drains which caused the outbreak. But where is that form of words which, dropped in leaflets over Germany and broadcast in forty languages, is going to shorten the war by years and save civilisation from the imbecility of wanton sacrifices? If Mr. Priestley can find them, he deserves to be made the Duke of Huddersfield, K.G., O.M.

HOME GUARD COMMISSIONS.

— One may declare honest opinions. I regret the decision. It is, I think, the second wrong decision made for the H.G. The first was the subsistence grant—which is not strictly equitable. The second—commissions—is not logical. When that decision was announced, something valuable went out of the H.G. spirit. But of course high authority may well have deemed the decision necessary and the loss justified. *But* — only one reason was assigned for granting commissions, and it was a very good reason: it would settle the question of who should take command when a unit of H.G. found itself working beside a Regular unit with a very junior commander. If the H.G. commander held no H.G. rank, even though he were a brilliant, still active soldier with the retired rank of Colonel, he would have been under the command of a Regular second lieutenant of nineteen years of age. But how is this logic worked out? It is freely admitted that the H.G. "fighting unit" in rural areas is the *Platoon*, if not the *Section*. The Company Commander, in the circumstances of distance and road congestion, cannot hope to direct the battle at any part of his far-flung line. The Battalion and Company Commanders in rural areas can and do direct the flow of paper and the training organisation *before* battle; *in* battle, they can only be rovers and postmen. And now the Battalion and Company Commanders are Colonels and Majors, the Platoon and Section Commanders are subalterns and sergeants. And the Regular takes precedence of the H.G. of equal rank! Thus the whole object of the risky decision is totally defeated.

LAMENT FROM BATH.—

Miss Eden's Mrs. Douglas in the *Semi-Attached Couple* is a counterpart of Mrs. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. After a bout of scandal concerning her aristocratic neighbours, she says to her husband: "Nothing is too bad to be true, Mr. Douglas; and nothing is true that is not bad." I was reminded of this aphorism by a lament which I have received from Bath concerning the deficiencies of the B.B.C., and its failure to supply good music. I feel sympathetic; I am not a radio fan or a B.B.C. blind worshipper. I am not fond of variety or crooning, or cheap sarcasm given with straight news. But I cannot forget that the B.B.C. has to cater for 20,000,000 listeners whose tastes are not always mine, and that it was a broadminded man who said: "All tastes are good." There *is* still a certain amount of good music played *if* you look for it and can listen-in when it is played, though there is less than formerly. I know also that musicians of talent are out of work, but I cannot be blind to B.B.C. difficulties. I fancy the majority of our national heroes to-day prefer popular music to heroic music, and are entitled to get it. My correspondent has my sympathy until she overstates her case with these sweeping denouncements: (1) that the Coldstream Guards never listen to the B.B.C. (which is too silly), but always to foreign stations; (2) than an evil Jewish influence is abroad in all our cultural institutions, set to destroy us body and soul; and has already gone a good way towards its goal with its night-clubs, strip-tease and the desecration of our Sundays. The same evil influence controls our Press and news-collecting services.

"I cannot think all this can be so, Anne; it is too bad to be true."

"Nothing is too bad to be true, Mr. Douglas. . . ." THE OLD STAGER

AFTER THE SURRENDER OF 38,000 ITALIANS : THE FINAL SCENE AT THE ENTRANCE TO BARDIA, WITH BRITISH TROOPS RESTING NEAR THE SEA WALL OVERLOOKING THE DEEP BLUE WATERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

The LAST PHASE at BARDIA

A Series of Official Pictures after the Fall of the Town on January 5

The town of Bardia itself was only the nerve-centre of a big defensive system into which thousands of Italian soldiers had been crammed. Apart from Fascist headquarters, which were located within Bardia itself, these thousands of defenders manned the perimeter defences encircling the harbour—some 40,000 of them, of whom 38,000 were captured when the Italians surrendered. The great value of Bardia to the enemy lay in the fact that it possesses a harbour—not a very big one, it is true, but of great importance for supply purposes. The state of this harbour at the moment of capture is shown in a picture reproduced on page 167. The town has been built on a promontory jutting out into the Mediterranean, with its harbour to the westward. The main buildings erected by the Italians look out to the sea : they are of solid construction and of pleasing architecture. Many of them—especially in the centre of the town—were badly damaged as a result of the very severe bombardment by British naval vessels and aircraft before the surrender

THE TOWN AND HARBOUR OF BARDIA DESERTED BY THE ITALIANS AFTER THEIR SURRENDER TO BRITISH AND IMPERIAL FORCES. INTO THE FAR DISTANCE STRETCHES THE MEDITERRANEAN—QUIET AND BLUE, AND EMPTY OF ALL ENEMY VESSELS !

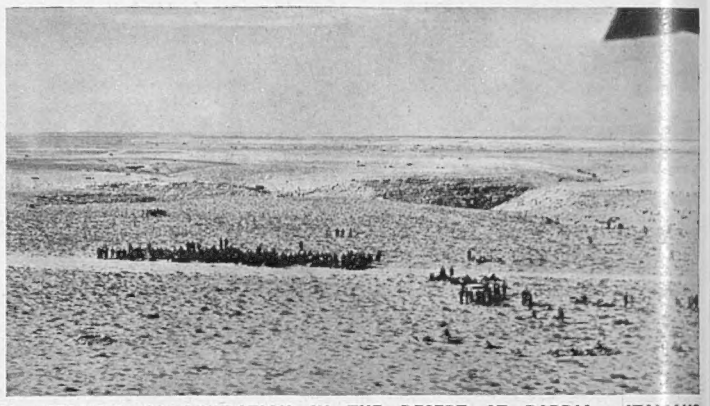
The LAST PHASE at BARDIA

(Continued)

HOW THE BRITISH FORCES MOVED UP TO THE ASSAULT: A PICTURE TAKEN FROM THE AIR SHOWING A BRITISH MOTOR TRANSPORT COLUMN MOVING IN CLOUDS OF DUST ACROSS THE DESERT AFTER HAVING PIERCED THE OUTER DEFENCES AT BARDIA

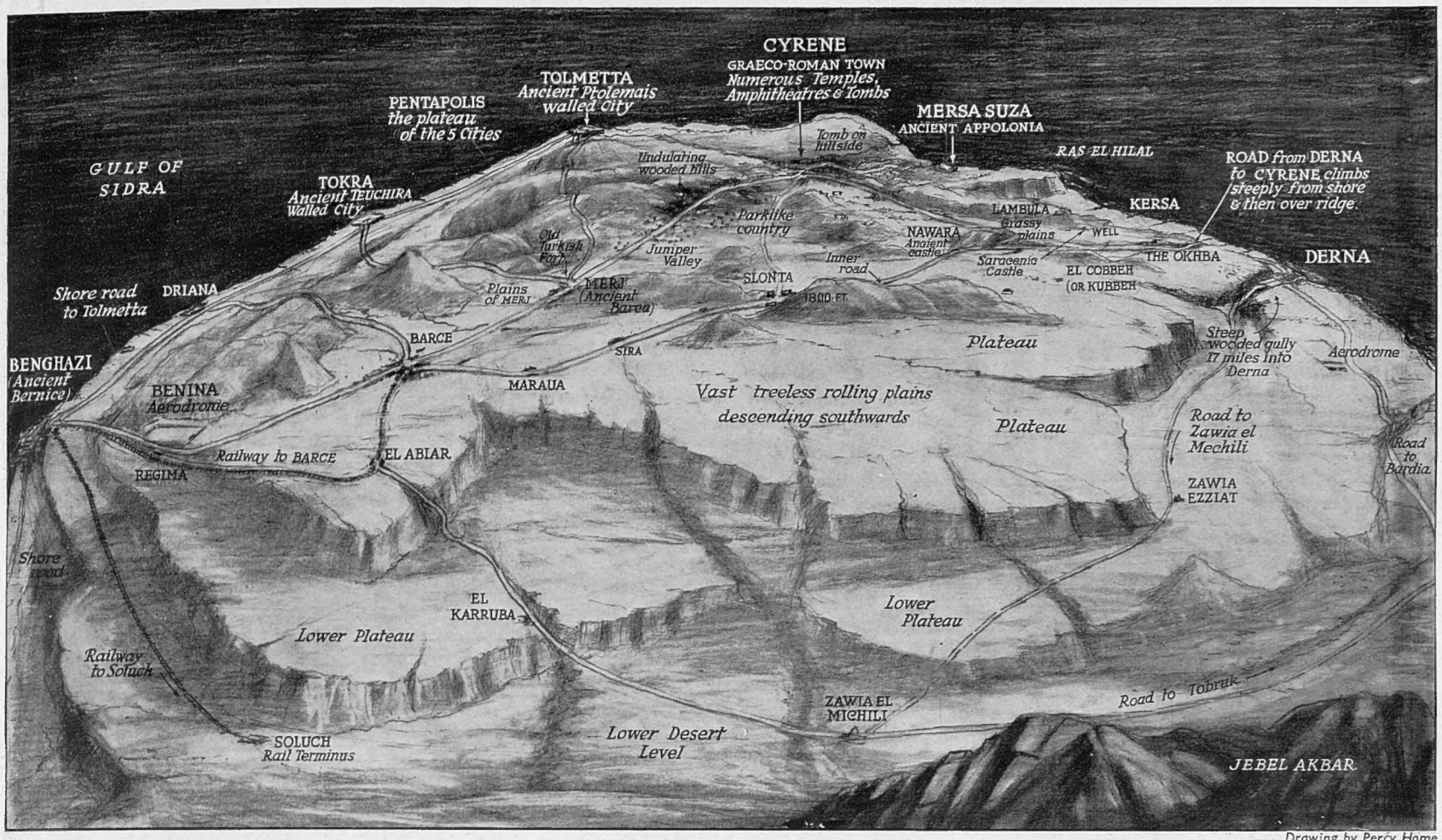
AS SEEN FROM A LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT: AN ITALIAN HOSPITAL INSIDE THE BARDIA DEFENCES WHILST THE ASSAULT WAS STILL IN PROGRESS AND WITH THE ITALIANS STILL IN OCCUPATION

MARCHING INTO CAPTIVITY ALONG THE COAST ROAD AT BARDIA: ITALIAN PRISONERS AFTER THE FALL OF THE TOWN



A PRISONER CONCENTRATION IN THE DESERT AT BARDIA: ITALIANS WAITING TO SURRENDER TO OUR TROOPS, WITH OTHER ITALIANS COMING IN FROM THE RIGHT FOR THE SAME PURPOSE

LIKE A VAST HERD OF CATTLE ON THE AFRICAN PLAINS: A HUGE CONCENTRATION OF ITALIAN PRISONERS ROUNDED UP ON THE FLAT PLATEAU OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF BARDIA. THESE WERE ONLY A PORTION OF THE 38,000 PRISONERS TAKEN ON THIS OCCASION



Drawing by Percy Horne

AFTER THE CAPTURE OF DERNA: THE HIGH PLATEAU OF CYRENAICA, INTO WHICH THE "ARMY OF THE NILE" HAS NOW PENETRATED

Leaving the rocky plains of the Marmarica behind, where patches of scrub denoted a change of terrain, General Wavell's forces pushed still farther west into a terrain which soon gave evidence that an altogether different country had been entered—the phase of the sandy Libyan stretches was a thing of the past. The whole massif of the Cyrenaican plateau now faced the British forces. Heights begin to rise to 1,000 ft. and in the central area of Slonta, an elevation of 1,800 ft. and possibly 2,000 ft. in some of the peaks is reached. The first movement into the new terrain of high gullies with steep, wooded sides was made when the town of Derna was occupied on January 30 and the forces which had quitted that position were encountered holding the ridge of a steep, wooded gully to the south-west of the town. The position occupied by the enemy and from which he was offering resistance is typical of many to be found in the whole of the eastern part of the Cyrenaican plateau. Derna itself is approached by a long wooded hollow, terminating in cliffs overlooking the shore. The road into Derna was by way of "the Seven Sisters"; our advancing troops approached by way of the main wooded gully, where, it is reported, a number of native refugees blocked the way. There are two westerly ways out of Derna, one climbing steeply up the cliff by the shore to the high ground from which Cyrene, the ancient Greek city, still looks down on the Mediterranean, chafing against a rock-bound coast. Partly submerged, the remains of Appolonia, the one-time prosperous port of Cyrene, still raises its city walls. The other road leads more directly towards Benghazi, by way of Slonta (a high position commanding views of wide desert plains extending towards the south). Thence the road passes westward to Barce, where one of the few stretches of railway in Italian North Africa is met with; it descends to the local capital, leaving Benina aerodrome on its right. The only other railway line in Cyrenaica runs from Benghazi to Soluch away to the south. The Cyrene road, already mentioned, passes through attractively wooded districts resembling the open park lands of Western Europe. This part of the coast is studded with the sites of the Greek cities which gave the name Pentapolis to it

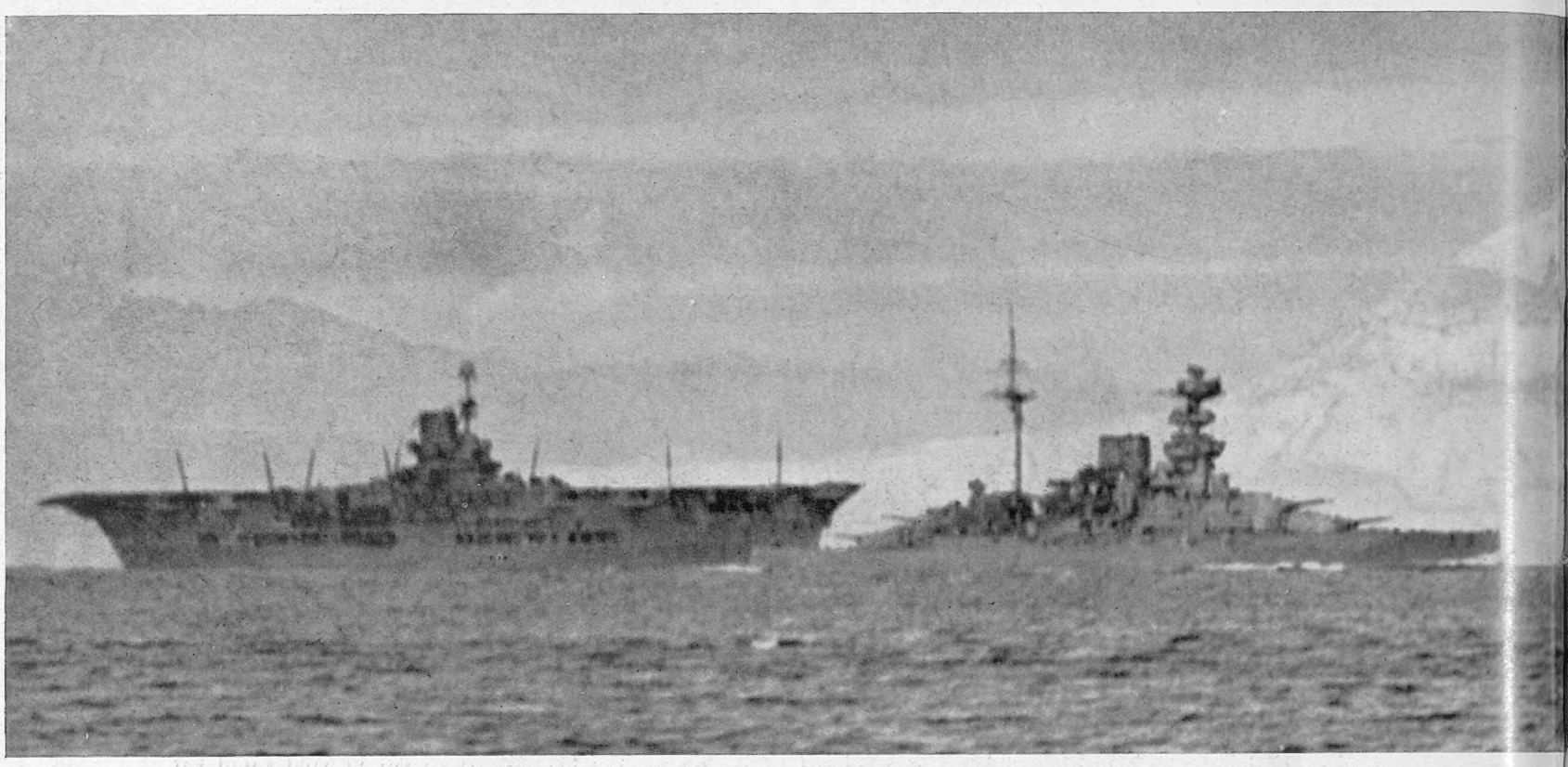
THE WRECKED PORT OF BARDIA: A CLOSE-UP OF THE HAVOC WROUGHT BY THE NAVY AND R.A.F.

Without the command of the seas, the Italian occupation of the North African coast was always dangerous. There was, of course, the Italian Navy—which should have opposed our naval activities in the great inland sea; but as they chose to remain safe in harbour, there was no opposition to our naval units in the operations at Sidi Barrani, Sollum, Bardia, or Tobruk. And this is some of the damage which the Navy wrought during their attacks. The harbour small as it is, and its surrounding wharves and establishments on shore, must have proved an ideal target. At moments, when the guns of the Navy were in action, there could hardly have been a more dangerous spot along the whole North African coast!

The MEDITERRANEAN CONVOYS Go Through: *A Series of Official Photographs of the Navy in Action*

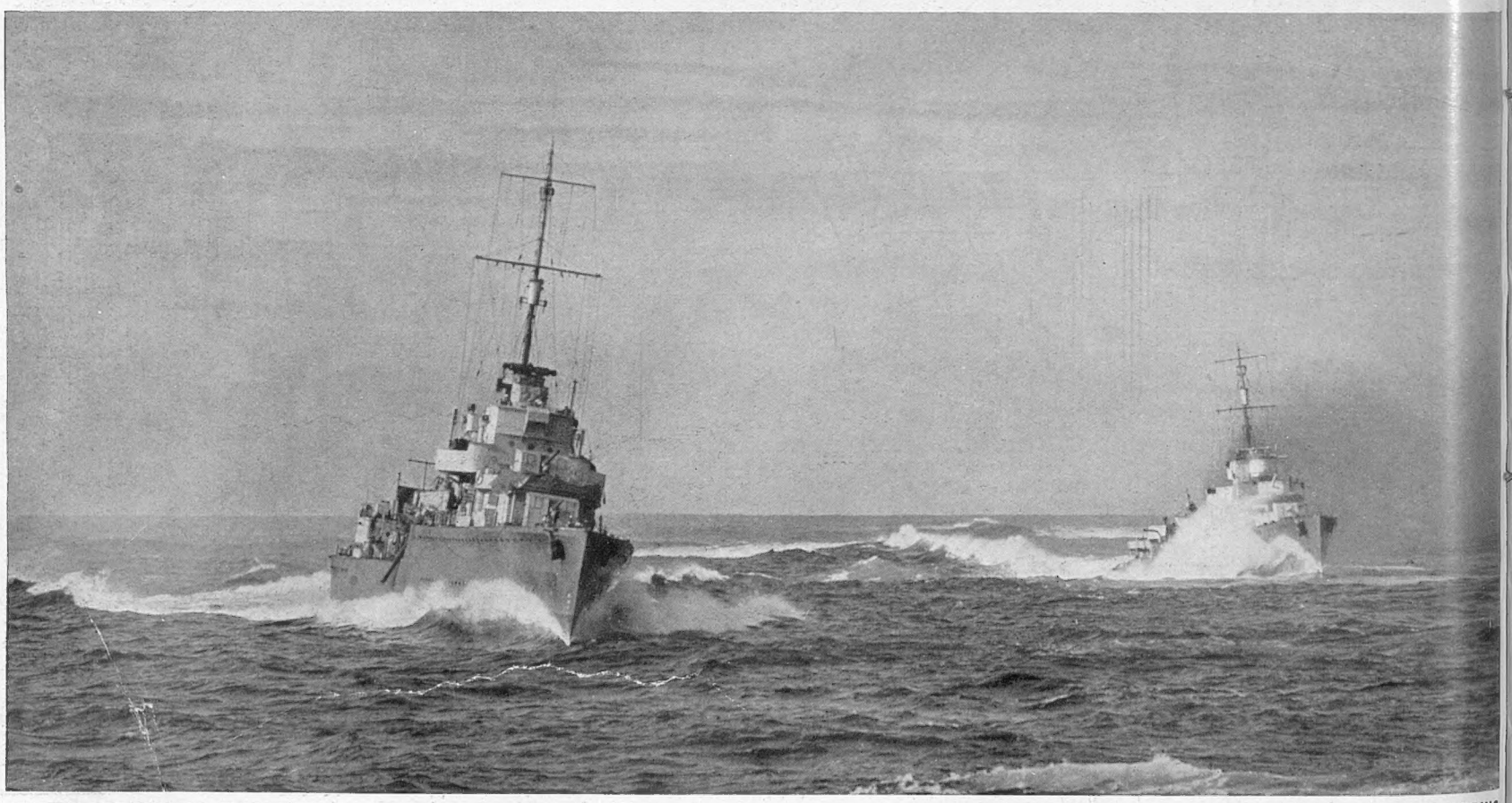
Above—**AN ATTACK ON THE CONVOY, SHOWING BOMBS FALLING AHEAD OF A BATTLESHIP, WITH THE LEADING SHIPS OF THE CONVOY ON THE RIGHT UNTOUCHED.**
On right—**SOME OF THE SHIPS OF THE CONVOY STEAMING THROUGH THE MEDITERRANEAN UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE BRITISH DESTROYER IN FOREGROUND**

The recent action in the Mediterranean, in which German dive-bombers made their first serious onslaught on British naval vessels in those waters, was occasioned by the passage of a British convoy to Greece. These merchantmen were carrying urgently-needed stores and equipment to our allies; and they were being escorted by naval units of the Fleet when they were attacked by dive-bombers recently arrived in Sicily and operating from an air base at Catania. All the ships of the convoy got through, but H.M.S. *Illustrious*, aircraft-carrier, was hit, and H.M.S. *Southampton* was lost. These pictures were taken during the passage and show incidents during a somewhat exciting voyage

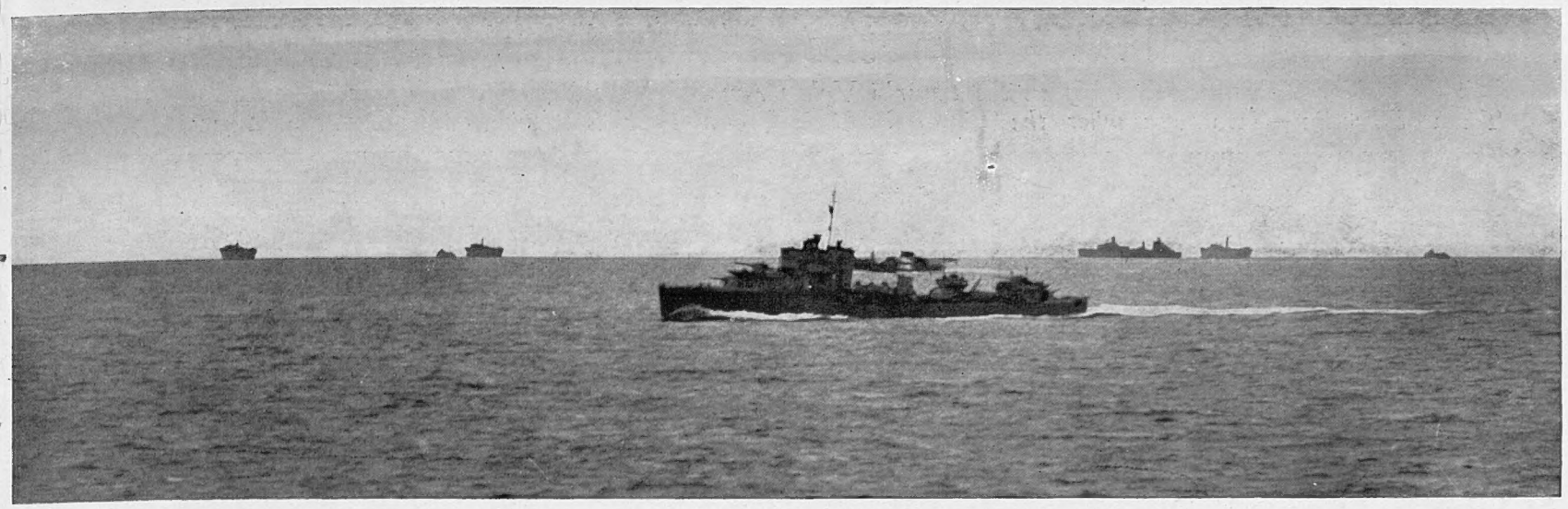


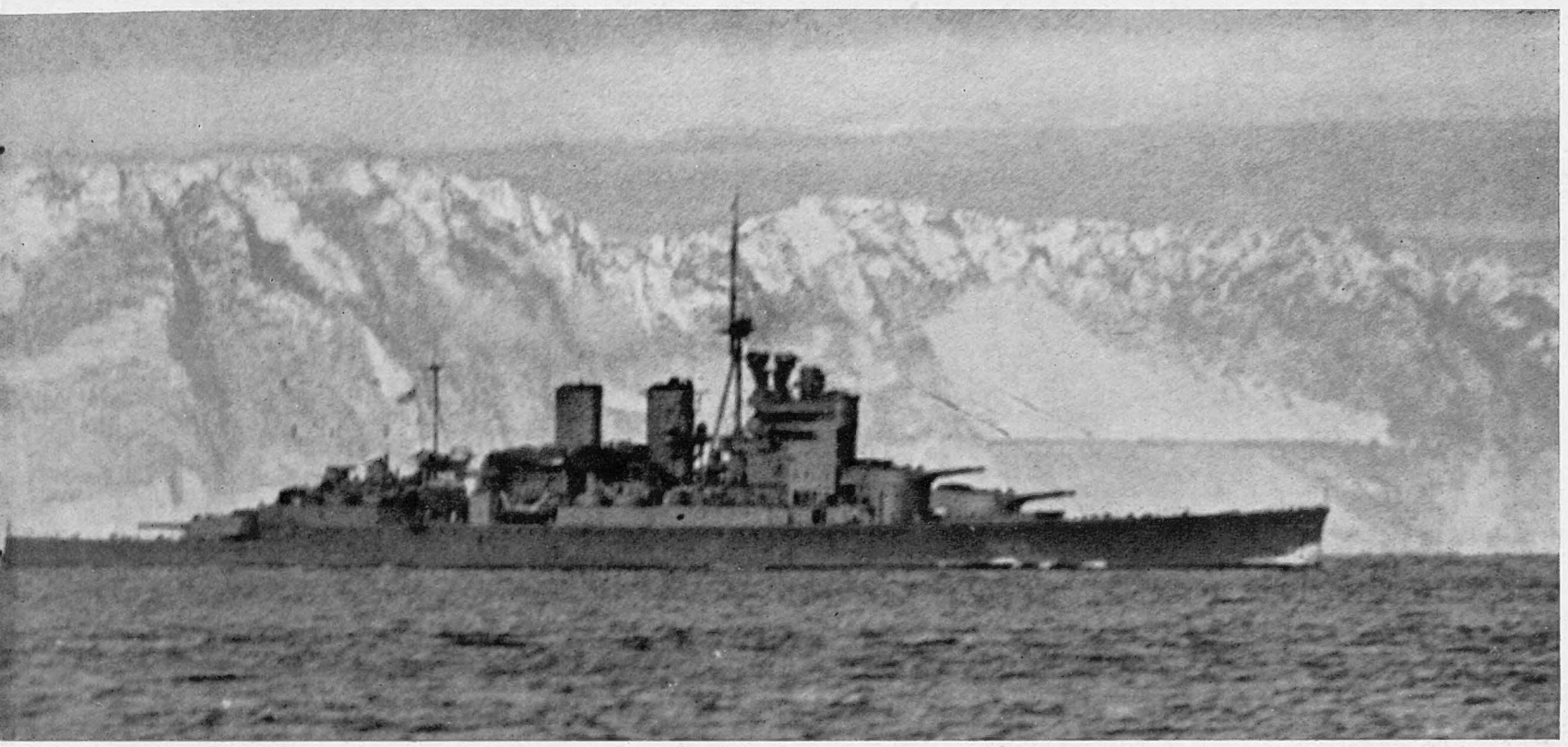
THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: POWERFUL UNITS OF THE FLEET STEAMING PAST THE MIGHTY ROCK OF GIBRALTAR

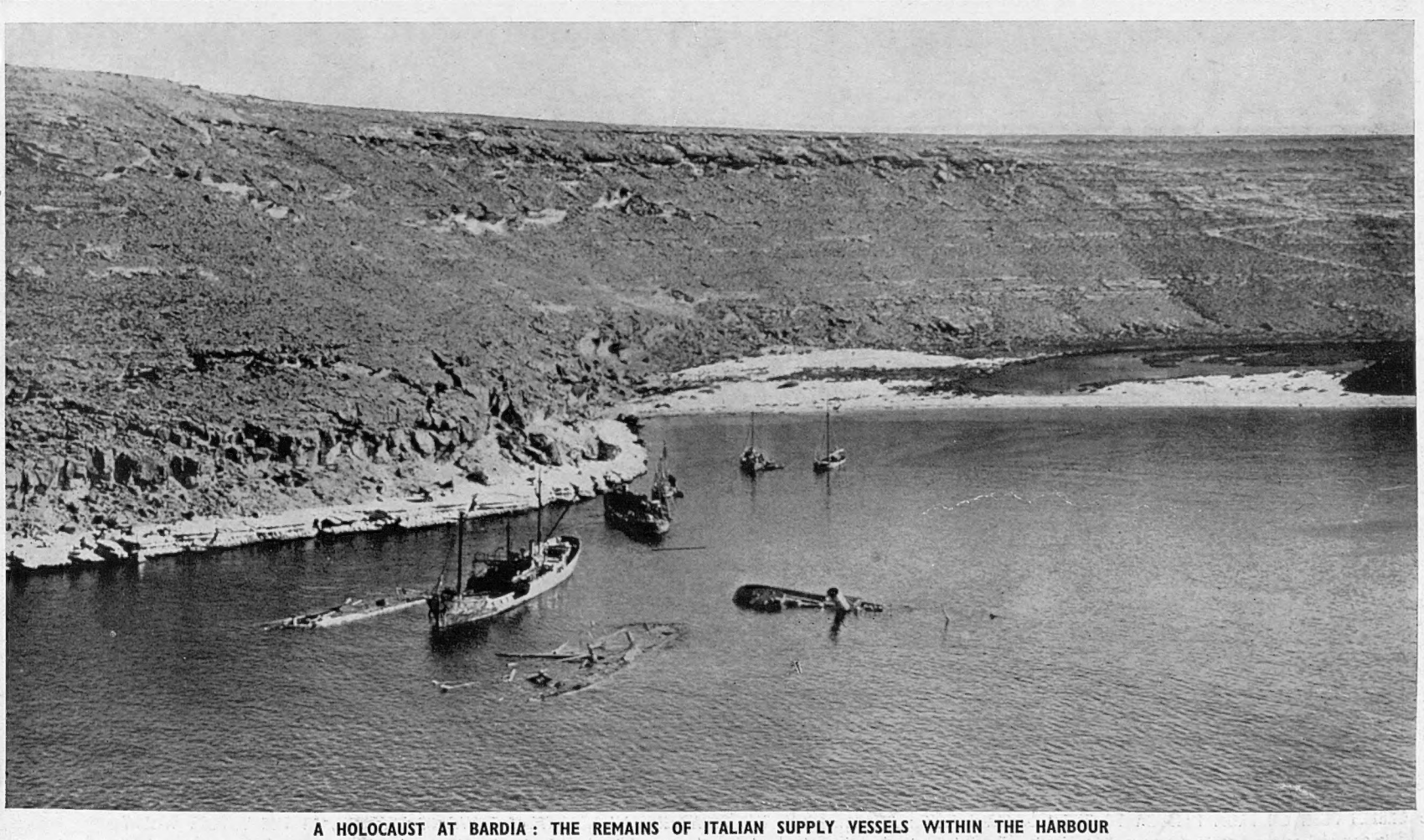
In the van is the *Renown*, followed by another battleship and by the aircraft-carrier *Ark Royal* (many times "sunk," but still afloat!). Like other pictures on these pages, this was taken during the passage of a British convoy through the Mediterranean with important material assistance for the Greeks. The much-vaunted Italian Navy was conspicuous by its absence on this occasion (as on others!), and it was left to the newly-arrived German dive-bombers to attempt to check the passage of the British ships. To judge by the bow waves, the three warships seen here are all steaming at a moderate speed. The towering mass of the Rock of Gibraltar, which forms the background of this picture, makes an impressive setting for this demonstration of British might.



LEAPING FORWARD AT HIGH SPEED TO FRUSTRATE THE ATTACKS OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT: TWO BRITISH DESTROYERS TURNING TO TAKE UP FRESH POSITIONS DURING THE ATTACK ON THE CONVOY BY THE NEWLY-ARRIVED GERMAN DIVE-BOMBERS FROM SICILY





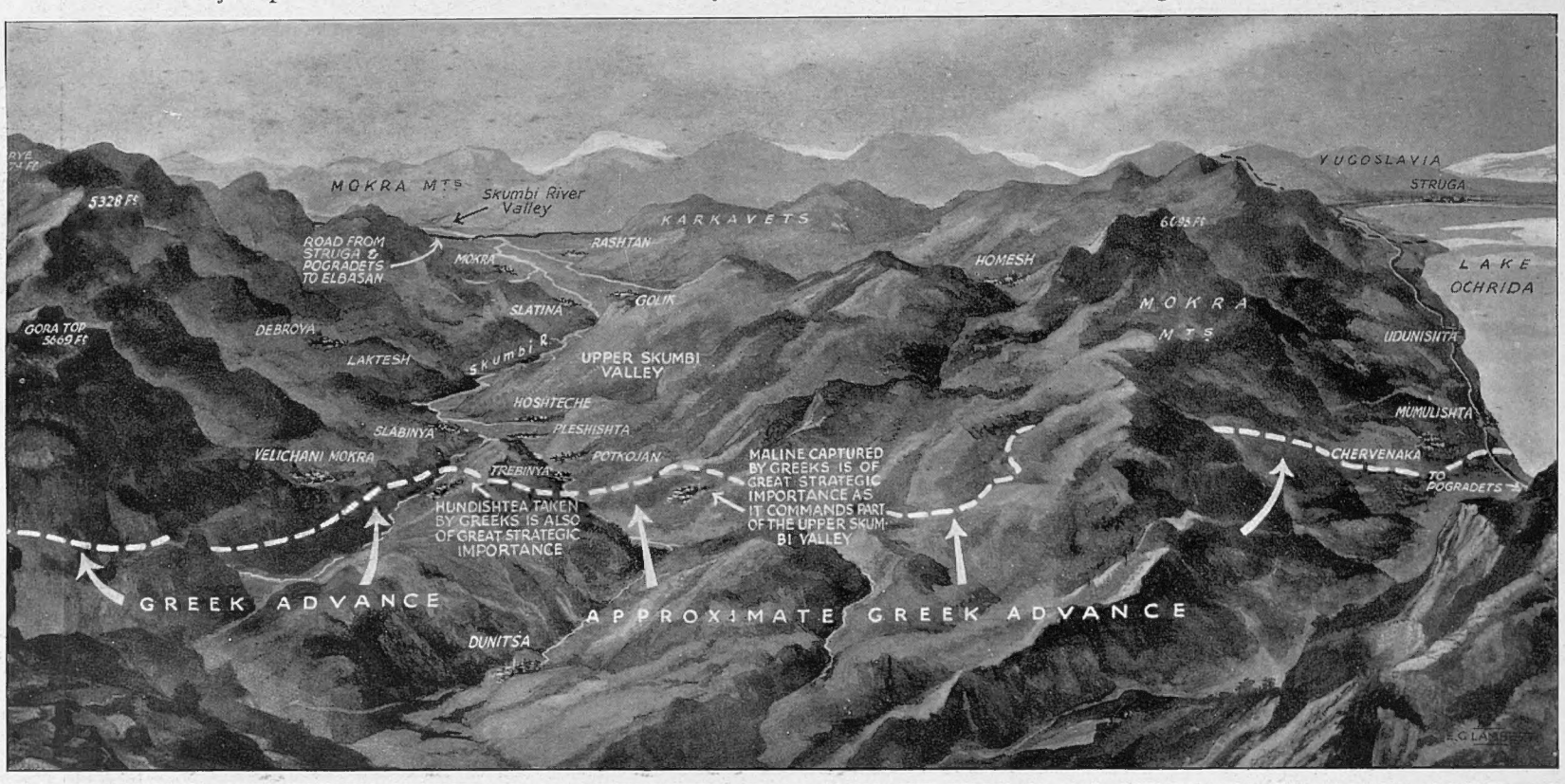


A HOLOCAUST AT BARDIA : THE REMAINS OF ITALIAN SUPPLY VESSELS WITHIN THE HARBOUR

During the operations preceding the fall of Bardia, H.M.S. *Aphis* penetrated close in between the high cliffs which form the entrance to the harbour. Here she sank four Italian vessels, and damaged the remainder in the manner shown in this picture. *Aphis* is a river gunboat of 625 tons which was built during the last war. She is, naturally, of shallow draught ; she mounts two 6-in. guns amongst others, and can prove a very formidable opponent at close range. The entrance to the harbour at Bardia is narrow and enclosed by two tongues of land of curious geological formation : that the waters here are not deep is evidenced by the manner in which the sunken vessels are lying on the harbour bottom

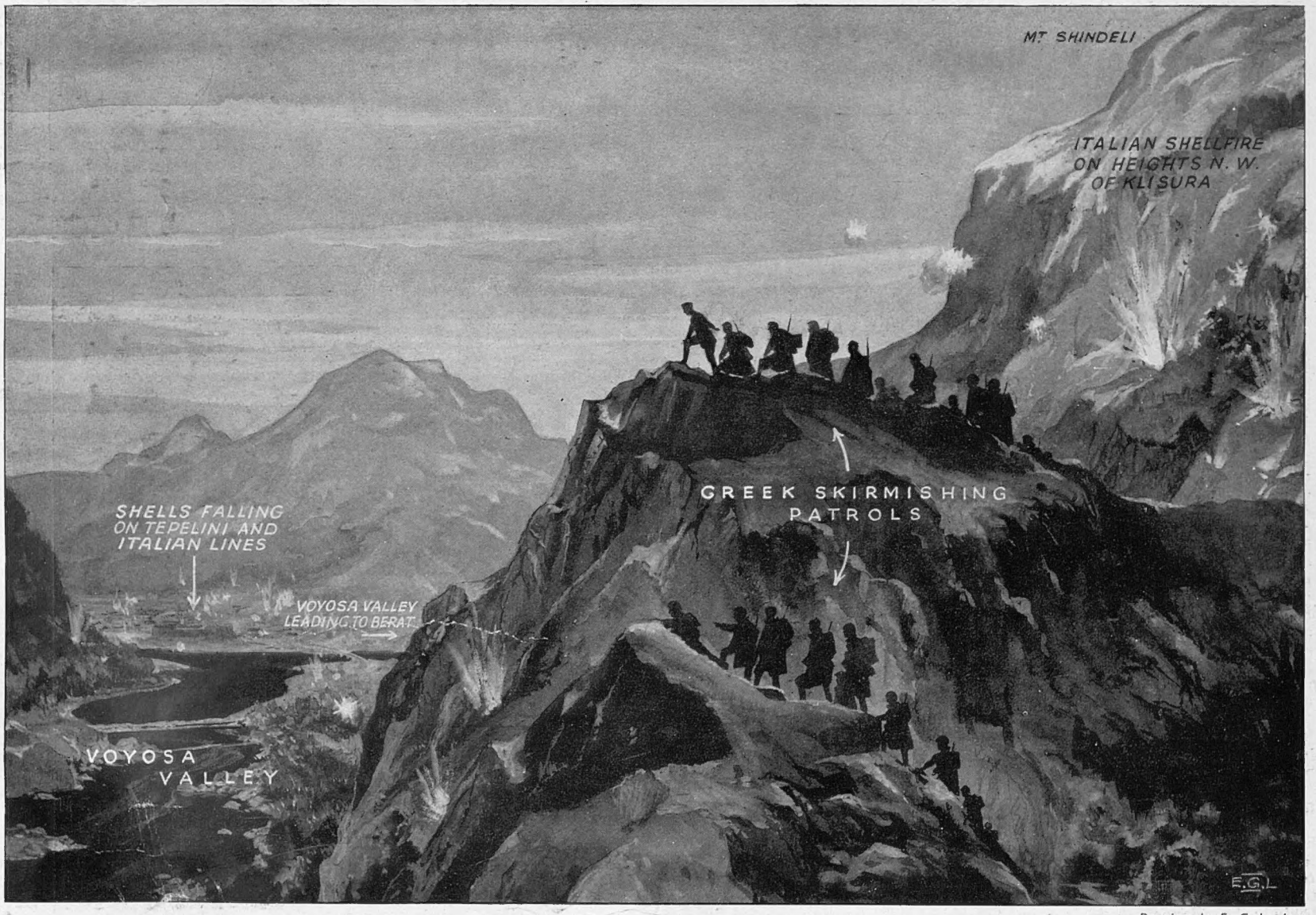
The GREEK CAMPAIGN in the ALBANIAN MOUNTAINS

The Greeks are Advancing Steadily in the Skumbi Valley Area, and are also Encircling the Important Town of Tepelini—Two Areas where the Skill of the Greek Mountaineers is Proving of the Greatest Value



HOW THE GALLANT GREEK ARMY HAS ADVANCED ON ITS NORTH-WESTERN FRONT, ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE OCHRIDA NEAR THE YUGOSLAV FRONTIER, AND IN THE JUMBLED, MOUNTAINOUS REGION FLANKING THE SKUMBI RIVER

After a lull brought about by the very severe weather in Albania, the Greek Army is once more pushing forward, after having smashed an offensive launched against it by the new Italian Commander-in-Chief, General Cavallero. Owing to their handling of this campaign, however, the Italian effectives in Albania have been so reduced that, in the opinion of neutral observers in Athens, they can have very little hope of checking the present Greek advance. In their latest series of counter-attacks, which have been extended over a whole week of severe fighting, it has been estimated that the Italians must have suffered losses amounting to some 40 per cent.! The diagrammatic view given above shows the area of the Skumbi Valley; to the right of the Greek line is Lake Ochrida, and just to the north of their positions begins the Albania-Yugoslavia frontier. Away to the left is a jumbled mass of mountains, many of which are nearly 6,000 ft. high; it is here that the Greeks have achieved their most striking successes—in particular, at Maline and at Hundishtea, both strategic points of great importance. Many stories are told of the methods employed by the Greek mountaineers in scaling almost inaccessible peaks and hauling up their guns behind them, thus taking the Italians by surprise. Prisoners captured by our Allies declare that many of these operations have been carried out in the greatest secrecy, the Greeks frequently appearing in the *rear* of their foes. Incidentally, it has been reported that some of the prisoners only arrived from Italy last month as reinforcements for the unsuccessful Italian counter-attacks



Drawings by E. G. Lambert

THE GREEKS PUSH ON FROM KLISURA TO THE MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS DOMINATING THE STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT TOWN OF TEPELINI, IN THE VOYOSA VALLEY

This town is now well to the fore in the news from Albania. Tepelini lies in the valley of the Voyosa River: its importance rests in the fact that it commands the road from the interior to the port of Valona. Here, too, an important road also leads to Berat, at the very heart of Central Albania; but, with the recent occupation of Klisura by the Greeks, this road can no longer be used by the Italians. The Greeks have now occupied the mountain heights surrounding the town of Tepelini, and it has been stated that it is only a matter of time before the town falls. The fighting in this area has largely been of the nature depicted in the above drawing, with Greek patrols pushing closer and closer to the valley and with the fighting taking place in the mountain ranges thousands of feet above the floor of the valley. It is along this section of the front that the Italians have been endeavouring to make a stand under the orders of the new Italian C.-in-C., General Cavallero. It has been estimated that Italian losses since the outbreak of war with Greece have not been fewer than 50,000

THE TIDE ADVANCES OVER THE MAZE OF MUD FLATS—submerged at high tide, but uncovered when the waters run out—along the East Friesian Coast behind Borkum and Norderney in the North Sea—Drawing by Montague Dawson

THE NEW "RIDDLE OF THE SANDS"

A special "Sphere" Section devoted to One Aspect of the Invasion Question—the Maze of Mud Flats Screening the Friesian Coast behind which lie the German Harbours of Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven, and others, which May Even Now be Concealing Some of the Enemy's Plans

"OTHER aircraft bombed an enemy aerodrome on the island of Borkum, where barracks were hit and a fire broke out. . . ." Interspersed among the more frequent communiqués of the R.A.F. dealing with visits of our bombers to the Ruhr, and the naval ports of western France, come these brief but none the less intriguing references to the bombing of certain objectives on the island fringe which guards the 70 miles of Germany's western coast. This string of islands really begins opposite the Dutch coast, those belonging to Holland being separated from the German islands by the wide channel-mouth of the Ems River. These odd-shaped masses of land and wind-blown grass extend in an easterly direction towards the mouth of the River Weser and Jade Bay.

Northward of Wangeroog, the final island of the string, there is the wide gap of Heligoland Bay, before a more irregular group of islands (including Sylt) complete what was palpably the edge of the old shoreland of Europe in the remote past. It is difficult for anyone with an intimate knowledge of these islands to resist a keen curiosity as to what it is that suggests the dropping of bombs on Borkum and Norderney—Sylt, we know, was bombed heavily in the earlier part of the war owing to the existence of seaplane bases on the inland side of that strangely-shaped island.

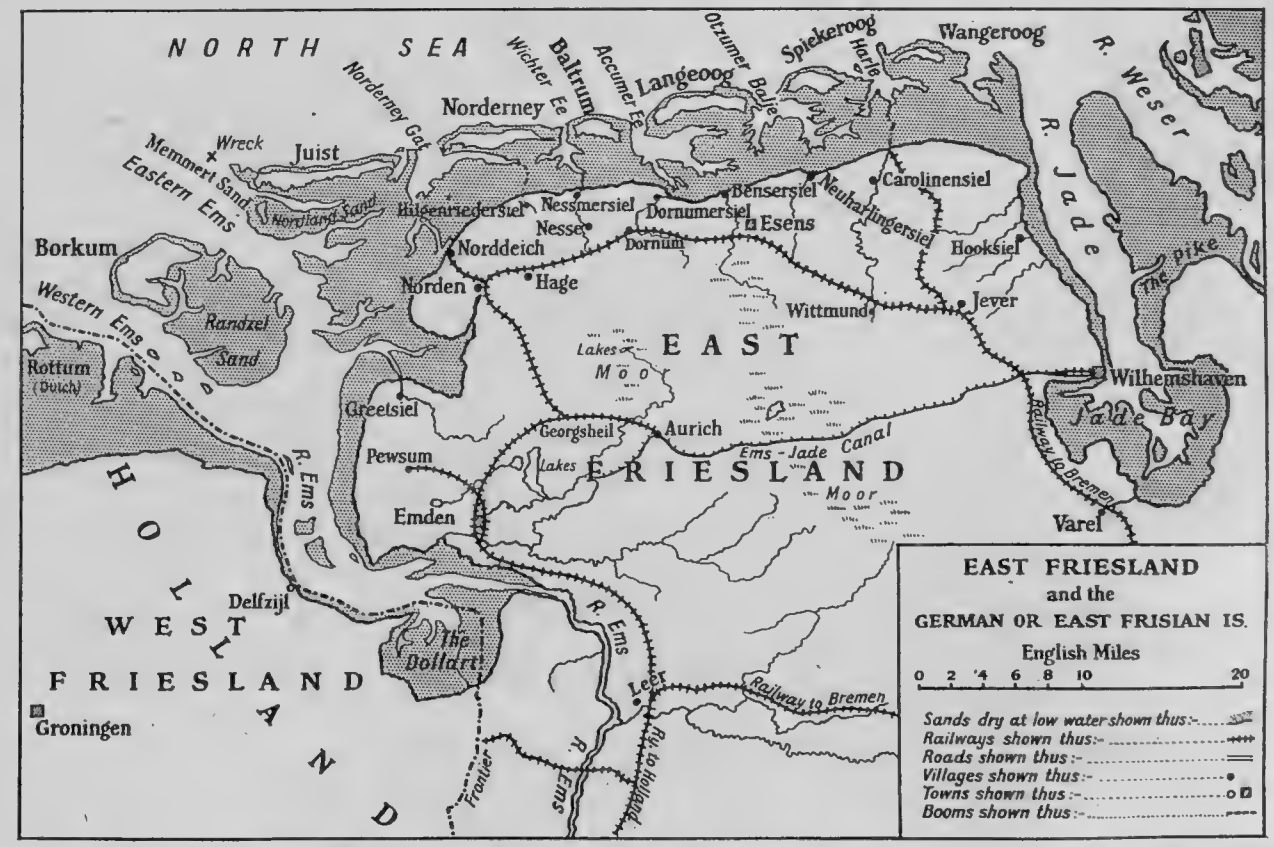
The existence of these islands and the complex series of sand-banks and channels which lie behind them was brought vividly to the notice of the British public in the year 1903 when the extraordinary volume entitled *The Riddle of the Sands*, a record of Secret Service, was issued by Mr. Erskine Childers in the form of an exciting novel. As the volume is out of print at the present time it may be well to remind our readers that the narrative concerns a "Mr. Arthur H. Davies," a very keen yachtsman, who at the time when the story opens had been engaged on exploring the maze of channels to which we have referred. Davies is joined by a friend, one "Carruthers," at Flensburg, on the Baltic side of Schleswig-Holstein.

Carruthers learns from his friend, gradually, the curious circumstances which have brought him away from the Friesian Islands to the Baltic. Although the *Dulcibella* was admirably suited to penetrating the difficult waters behind the islands, there is no suggestion that Davies had been engaged upon anything but a yachting holiday, when he stumbles upon mysterious circumstances which seem to indicate very vividly that his presence is not desired in the neighbourhood of the Friesian Coast. Together the two friends decide to return and unravel, if possible, the mystery of what appeared to be an attempt upon Davies's life. Together the two friends pore over the charts, three of which it will be remembered, were reproduced in Erskine Childers' volume. Commenting on these charts Carruthers points out: "It will be seen that the three broad fairways of the Jade, Weser, and Elbe split up the sands into two main groups. The westernmost of these is symmetrical in outline, an acute-angled triangle, very like a sharp steel-shod pike, if you imagine the peninsula from which it springs to be the wooden haft. The other is a huge congeries of banks, its base resting on the Hanover coast, two of its sides tolerably clean and even, and the third, that facing the north-west, ribboned and lacerated by the fury of the sea, which has eaten out deep cavities and struck hungry tentacles far into the interior. The whole resembles an inverted E, or, better still, a rude fork on whose three deadly prongs, the Scharhorn Reef, the Knecht Sand, and the Tegeler Flat, as on the no less deadly point of the pike, many a good ship splinters herself in northerly gales. Following this simile, the Hohenhorn bank, where Davies was wrecked, is one of those that lie between the upper and middle prongs.

(Continued on following page)

Thirty-eight years ago, in 1903, the whole of Britain was discussing a remarkable new novel with the intriguing title **THE RIDDLE OF THE SANDS.** In this book the author, Mr. Erskine Childers, a naval officer, under the guise of fiction had outlined a complete plan for the invasion of Britain by the Germans from the flats lying off the West German coast. The book went to many editions: not only was it an epic of yachting—it was a first-class piece of Secret Service work which had a lasting effect on British naval policy. There are some, in fact, who attribute to *The Riddle of the Sands* the subsequent basing of the British Grand Fleet on the east coast. To-day, the scheme outlined in 1903 by Childers *may* still be under consideration by the enemy. Whether this is so or not, the Section presented here will probably prove of great interest to many of our readers, who may be wondering what is going on "behind the scenes" on this extremely curious stretch of coast.

ROBERT ERSKINE CHILDERS, the author of *The Riddle of the Sands*, was a British politician and naval officer, born in 1870. He served in the South African War, and in the 1914-1918 war he was an officer in the R.N.A.S. Until he became identified with the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland he was a man of undoubted integrity and patriotism; but having joined the Republicans in their armed resistance to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922, he was captured and shot by the Free State Government on November 24, 1922—a melancholy end to a man who had performed great services to his country



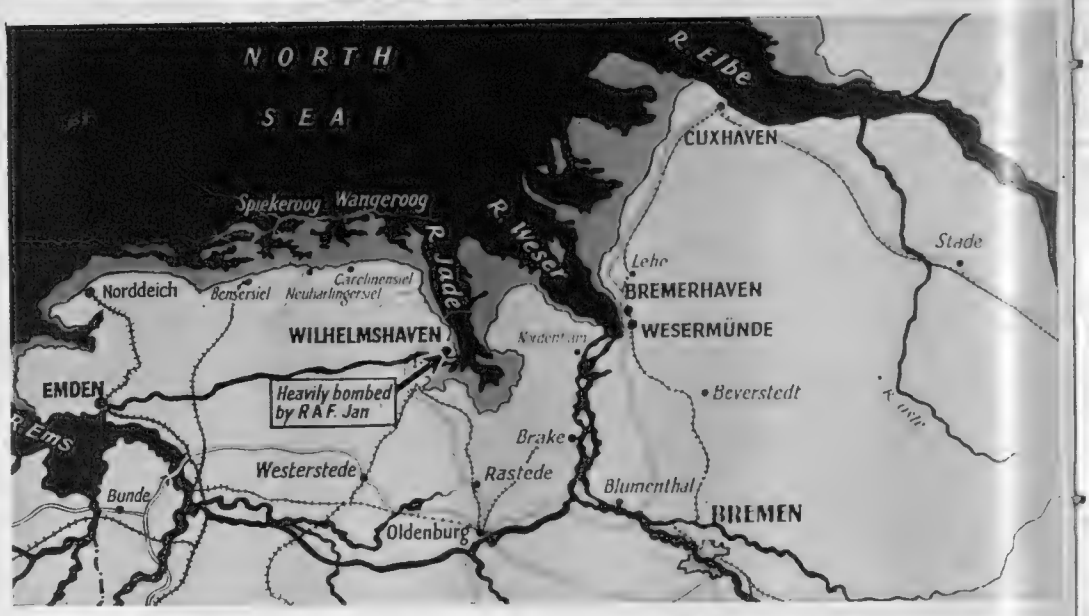
THE CHART OF THE "GERMAN OR EAST FRIESIAN ISLANDS" WHICH CHILDERS PUBLISHED IN "THE RIDDLE OF THE SANDS"

Here the whole of the coastline of East Friesland is given in considerable detail. It extends from the Island of Borkum at the mouth of the River Ems separating Holland from Germany, up to the island of Wangeroog at the mouth of the River Jade. The whole of the mainland area is well served by a close-knit network of railways, it will be observed, thus indicating its strategic importance. *The Riddle of the Sands*, in which this chart was originally published, is now out of print: it is, however, surprisingly up-to-date in the ideas and possibilities expressed therein!

b

Drawing by D. Macpherson

GERMANY'S GREAT NAVAL BASES, SCREENED FROM THE SEA BY THE FRINGE OF EAST FRIESIAN ISLANDS AND THEIR MILES OF HALF-SUBMERGED SAND-FLATS : This bird's-eye view shows the whole region of East and North Friesland. The protecting fringe of islands is continuous from Borkum on the Dutch frontier to Wangeroog at the mouth of the Jade River. Farther to the north are Sylt and Amrin and the other islands of the North Friesian group. This is the area of German naval activity, and it is here that the greater part of her fleet lies at anchor in the great bases of Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven, Brunsbuttel, and others. It is a fascinating region, and one to which the R.A.F. has paid much attention since the outbreak of the war



HOW NATURE HAS PROTECTED THE WESTERN SHORES OF GERMANY—THE COMPLICATED SAND-FLATS EXTENDING FROM THE RIVER EMS TO THE ELBE : In the last war this region was quite inaccessible to the British Grand Fleet and lay secure and untouched within the shelter of the protecting islands and sand-flats. To-day, however, it is different—not only can all the vital points be reached by bombing aircraft, but reconnaissance planes can keep careful watch of the enemy's activities in this maze of tortuous channels and flat islands

THE NEW "RIDDLE OF THE SANDS"—*cont.*

"East Friesland is a short, flat-topped peninsula, bounded on the west by the Ems estuary and beyond that by Holland, and on the east by the Jade estuary; a low-lying country, containing great tracts of marsh and heath, and few towns of any size; on the north side none. Seven islands lie off the coast. All, except Borkum, which is round, are attenuated strips, slightly crescent-shaped, rarely more than a mile broad, and tapering at the ends; in length averaging about six miles, from Norderney and Juist, which are seven and nine respectively, to little Baltrum, which is only two and a half."

Davies is enthusiastic over the district as a sailor's paradise. "Look at it, all *sand*. You can explore for days without seeing a soul. These are the channels; they are very badly charted, but that made it all the more fun."

There was just an occasional village here and there. Only at one or two spots were the islands being developed as sea-bathing places, for a brief summer season.

Davies argues out the possibilities of the islands for defence of Germany's coast land.

"About this coast," resumed Davies. "In the event of war it seems to me that every inch of it would be important, *sand and all*. Take the big estuaries first, which, of course, might be attacked or blockaded by an enemy. At first sight you would say that their main channels were the only things that mattered. Now, in time of peace there's no secrecy about the navigation of these. They're buoyed and lighted like streets, open to the whole world, and taking an immense traffic; well charted, too, as millions of pounds in commerce depend on them. But now look at the sands they run through, intersected, as I showed you, by threads of channels, tidal, for the most part, and probably only known to smacks and shallow coasters, like that galliot of Bartels."

Gradually he becomes sure that the mystery centres somewhere between Borkum and Norderney, and it is in this district that the action of the story develops. The two friends soon realise that they are being watched, first by one Dolmann, of doubtful nationality, and later by a German naval officer, commander of a gunboat, patrolling the island waters. There are many adventures among the foam-flecked channels, marked by their little Y-shaped booms, till at last the secret is discovered, when, escaping the dangers of fog and oncoming tide, the friends light upon the existence of the seven "Siels" or entrances through the dykes, to channels, leading into the mainland where flat-bottomed barges of special shape are being housed for trial in the open sea. With a rush of conviction Davies and Carruthers come to the conclusion that the secret of the channels is not one of defence but of offence; in other words, that an elaborate plan for the invasion of England was being tested in secret behind the shelter of the East Friesian sand-banks.

The book made excellent reading as a novel, and just how far its more serious side had influence in high places it is intriguing to imagine. Four years later we find Lord Fisher explaining to Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, that in the event of hostilities with Germany, the Admiralty had plans for the seizure, as early as possible in the war, of the island of

Germany's Island Fringe Bombed by the R.A.F.

This fringe of protective islands extends from Borkum on the south, where the Dutch islands begin, to Sylt in the north, off Schleswig-Holstein. The two islands north of Sylt which complete the series geologically, belong to Denmark.

Since the opening of the war, the R.A.F. have been active on many occasions over this group of islands : here are some of the places bombed by them up till the end of 1940 :

Amrin (in neighbourhood of Sylt).—Aerodrome bombed, August 13, 1940.

Borkum.—Terminal island of East Friesian fringe. Seaplane base, aerodrome, gun positions, naval ships and supply ship in vicinity. Bombed seventeen times between July 14 and November 16, 1940.

Juist.—Aerodrome bombed, July 19, 1940.

Langeoog—Aerodrome bombed, July 19, 1940.

Norderney.—Important island of East Friesian group. Aerodrome, seaplane base, docks, enemy destroyers and seaplanes at moorings, bombed eighteen times between December 13, 1939, and November 13, 1940.

Sylt.—Large island off Schleswig coast, Hornum air base, aerodrome and bases near Sylt bombed eight times between December 13, 1939, to October 14, 1940.

Wangeroog.—Aerodrome bombed September 12, 1940.

BORKUM, MEMMERT, JUIST AND NORDERNEY—FOUR POINTS IN THE STORY OF THE FRIESIAN SAND-BANKS, WITH THREE OF THE "SIEL" ENTRANCES: All who have read the *Riddle of the Sands* will recognise the names given on this chart. The "*siels*" indicate the entrances from the sand-flats to the mainland. Behind the islands sunk in the Friesian Sea stretch mile after mile of sand-dunes masking any activities or concentrations going on behind

Borkum, as an advanced base for all our flotillas and inshore squadrons, blockading the German river-mouths. . . . The project of seizing Borkum had become more difficult by the development of aviation, the submarine, and the long-range gun. But as these factors influenced both sides the idea was not shelved. Very careful models were made in relief, of the German river mouths, and of all the islands, including the larger one of Sylt, to the north. The plan was held to be possible, but hazardous. Lord Fisher discussed this matter of the seizure of Borkum at some length, for it would have a necessary prelude for his scheme for forcing an entry into the Baltic. But he did not press the matter forward with the vigour which characterised so many of his other actions.

A little later we find Mr. Winston Churchill recording in his *World Crisis, 1911-18* how he endeavoured to concentrate the steps necessary to storm and seize the island of Borkum for the purpose of either blocking in the German Fleet or bringing it out to battle. It was with the second part of the prospect that the First Lord appears to have been specially interested for he agreed with Lord Fisher that it was better than "waiting to be kicked and wondering when and where." But to carry such a scheme to successful fruition necessitates the complete accord of those actually in command—but the complete sympathy and general agreement with the plan was not to be found. There was, on the other hand, a massive reliance on the static strength of the Grand Fleet, and the island of Borkum was not attacked during the War of 1914-18.

AMIDST THE SAND-FLATS OF THE FRIESIAN ISLANDS AT THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER EMS—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

Here is a typical scene in the region covered by the article and illustrations reproduced in this section. On a firmer stretch of sand is one of the lighthouses of the Friesian coast; at low tide only are the sand-flats uncovered as depicted here. At high tide the triangular posts indicate the course of the deeper channels which alone are navigable by craft with a draught of more than, say, three feet. The craft depicted is a Dutch *Bother*. The sands at low tide—quite firm and dry but with swift-flowing channels between—stretch for mile after mile along the coast

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF SYLT, LARGEST GERMAN ISLAND IN THE NORTH SEA

"Mysterious" because a veil seems to have descended on this vital spot. According to the Danish Press, all such places as the above (the "*letzte mühle*," or last windmill) have been converted into gun emplacements, munition dumps, barracks and military stores. Sylt has been bombed on many occasions by the R.A.F.: it must, therefore, be the scene of considerable enemy activity and concentrations. It is 39 square miles in extent—the largest of the Friesian Islands—and has about 5,000 inhabitants in peacetime

THE NEW "RIDDLE OF THE SANDS" (cont.)

WILHELMSHAVEN—the Heart of NAVAL GERMANY

Which Lies Behind a Screen Composed of the Friesian Islands and the Sand Flats off the Coast

Described by FRANK C. BOWEN

THE great German naval base at Wilhelmshaven has been very much in the public eye recently on account of the incessant attacks made by Allied airmen, but outside Service circles its story is comparatively little known. Yet it is very closely linked with the whole history of German naval ambition, for it was the first step in the expansion of heir fleet.

Of all the German states before the creation of the Reich, the only one which had any interest in naval affairs was Prussia. That interest was of entirely artificial growth, and was started by the Great Elector in the seventeenth century, when Prussia was still Brandenburg. It is significant that he based his plans very largely on corsair warfare, and whipped up what enthusiasm he could with the promise of loot. At that time his only seaport which could be used for naval purposes was Pillau, on the Baltic, and for his purposes it was necessary to have access to the open sea. He therefore came to an agreement with the Free City of Emden to give him naval rights, promising to protect their commerce in return. German naval enthusiasm died with him and was not revived until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Then Prince Adalbert of Prussia, and Prince Wilhelm who was afterwards the first Kaiser, started another movement, but they wanted better open sea facilities than Emden, with its commercial interests, could offer them. In 1852, therefore, long negotiations with the Grand Duke of Oldenburg resulted in his ceding Prussia what seemed to be a useless tract of marshland on the westerly promontory where the River Jade ran into the Jadebusen, a huge land-locked stretch of shallow water. Its approaches from the North Sea were made very difficult for an attacking force by innumerable sand-banks with shifting channels between them, but even for the small shallow-draught warships of that day it appeared to have no other advantages as a naval base.

The water facing it was shallow and was constantly silting up with the masses of sand brought down from the rivers and washed in from the North Sea. The land itself was most unstable marsh, and there was not even a supply of fresh water. The work of converting this into a naval dockyard was colossal, and when it was finally opened by Wilhelm I. in 1869 the bill was so great that it had a lot to do with the unpopularity of the infant navy with the German public. The opening by Wilhelm I. was made the occasion of an international naval gathering, but while *The Times* solemnly warned Germany that she was only asking for trouble if she played with a navy, and experienced naval officers were rather amused at the way things were being done, they had to admit that it was one of the best-planned and best-equipped dockyards in the world at that date, far bigger and better than the German Navy needed.

It was fifteen years after the opening of Wilhelmshaven Dockyard that Bismarck's policy encouraged the private German shipyards to provide facilities for building big men-of-war, and until then the work had to be done almost entirely by Wilhelmshaven and Kiel, which had been taken from the Danes. Later, when the private yards were capable of undertaking all the necessary new construction by contract, German naval policy was to allow them to do so, and only to build new ships in the Imperial yards to the extent that would enable the Ministry of Marine to check costs. The dockyards were primarily arranged for repairs and refits, and for carrying out experiments of the greatest secrecy.

When Wilhelm II. had overcome public opposition to the Navy, or had at least put himself into a position to ignore it, very large sums were spent on Wilhelmshaven, whose facilities were kept well

THE KAISERSTRASSE ON THE ISLAND OF BORKUM (*above*); AND THE OLD LIGHTHOUSE NOW A NAVAL OBSERVATION TOWER (*on right*): Borkum lies at the mouth of the Ems River close to the Dutch coast. It is 5 miles long and 2½ miles broad. In pre-war days it was annually visited by some 30,000 sea-bathers during the months of June to October. During the last war, Mr. Winston Churchill strongly advocated our occupation of this island, for the purpose of forcing the German Navy to come out and meet the Grand Fleet in battle. The island has been visited by R.A.F. bombers

ONE OF THE LAIRS OF THE NAZI MINELAYERS—THE JETTY ON THE ISLAND OF NORDERNEY (*below*); AND THE LIGHTHOUSE ON THE SAME ISLAND (*on left*): This is the "northern island," and it is the largest off the Friesland coast; it has a fine sandy beach and is a base for German minelayers, destroyers and seaplanes—hence the frequency of visits from the R.A.F. Formerly, it was the most fashionable of all German sea-bathing resorts. It is doubtful if such pursuits are encouraged by the enemy to-day!

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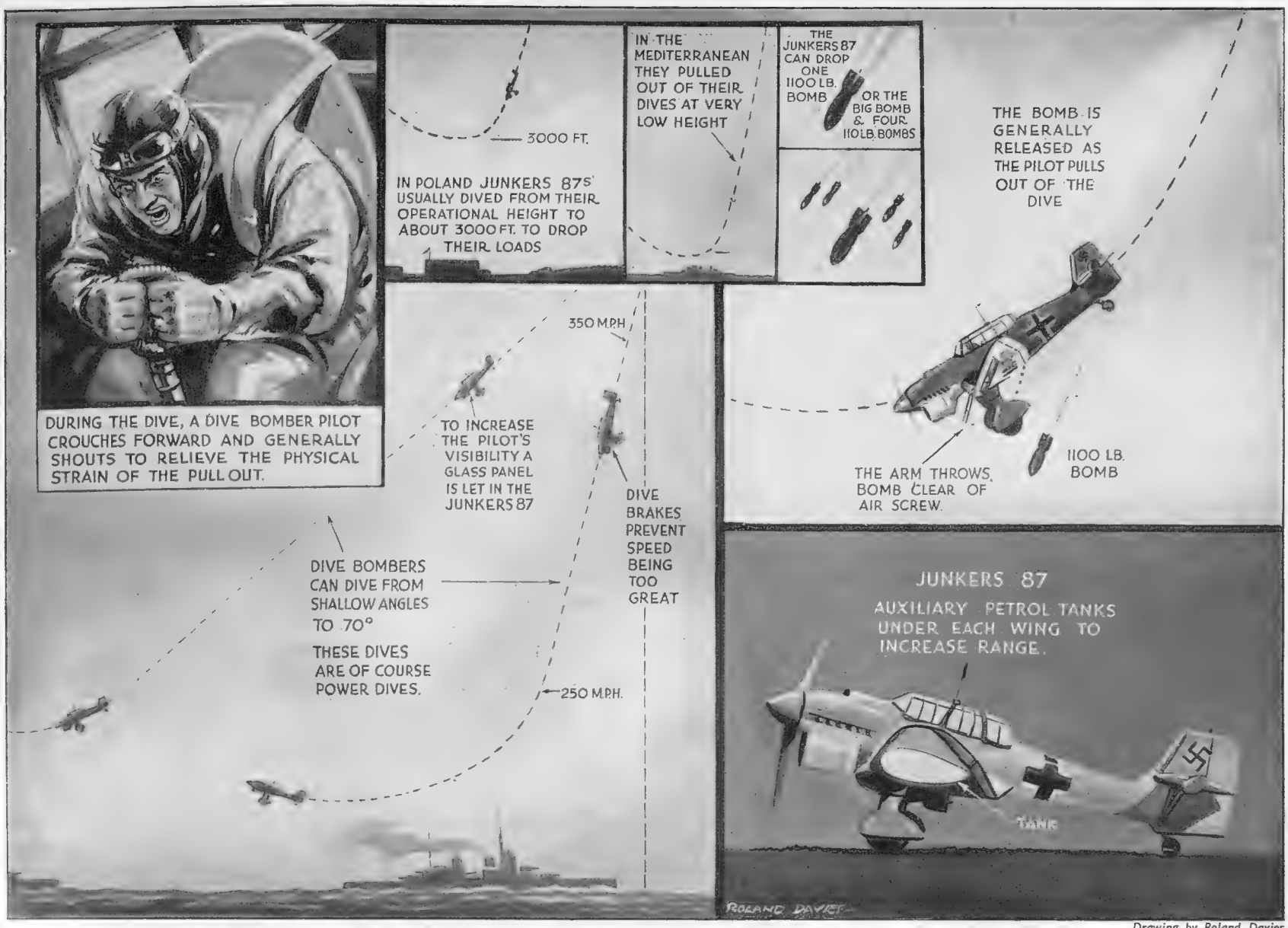


Drawing by Roland Davies

THE GERMAN DIVE-BOMBER: THE JUNKERS 87—WHAT IT IS, HOW IT OPERATES, AND THE PILOT'S REACTIONS

The Junkers 87 dive-bomber is a low-wing monoplane, with space for a pilot and an observer. It was built for one purpose, and one purpose alone—that of dropping a heavy-calibre bomb on a given target. To achieve this, the aircraft is dived directly on to the target, by this means attaining a greater precision in its aiming. Great havoc was wrought by this means in Poland and elsewhere; but since its failure over Britain the Ju. 87 had been banished—until its return over the waters of the Mediterranean. The load carried is usually one bomb of 1,100 lb., together with four smaller bombs under the wings of 110 lb. each. Just before releasing its big bomb, the pilot begins to pull out of his dive; the two movements almost coincide. To prevent his speed in the dive from becoming too rapid and thus frustrating his aim, the diving-brakes are applied as he turns down towards the target, and thus his descent is made at about a constant 250 m.p.h. In Poland it was usual for the dive-bombers to pull out at about 3,000 ft.; in the Mediterranean, however, they come very low, almost skimming the surface of the sea in an effort to avoid the anti-aircraft barrage. During the dive, the pilot usually crouches low over the "stick," and just before the "pull-out" he yells as hard as he can to lessen the effects of the "black-out" and to relieve the enormous strain engendered by the force of gravity as the aircraft abruptly changes from headlong descent to level flight

370 ft. per second is fast enough for the pilot to have little time for cogitation during a 2,000-ft. dive.

The pull-out is usually begun at about 900 ft. An instant *after* the pull-out has begun the bomb is released. This fact is not usually realised. Most people believe that the bomb is released while the bomber is still diving. The reason that the pull-out is begun first is that it gives the added kick to the bomb which maintains it in the same angle of dive as that along which it started and prevents the action of gravity from straightening out its path so that it would fall short of its objective.

Once the bomb is released the bomber tries by "evasive action" to dodge all the anti-aircraft fire which is coming up at him. A normal procedure is to fly very low, if possible below the minimum angle of depression of the A.-A. guns and zigzag violently.

Thus in the whole action of the dive-bomber there is little which calls for a high degree of flying skill. The target is always in view and the bomb-aiming is done by aiming the nose of the aeroplane directly at the target. The pull-out is the worst part of the whole business and the pilot may "black-out" in the process. For this reason the bigger Junkers Ju.88 two-motor dive-bomber is fitted with an automatic pull-out. The pilot trips a lever when the moment is at hand and the automatic device does the rest. It pulls up a tab on the elevator and brings the aeroplane out of the dive, so that when the crew recover from the effects of the acceleration they find the machine flying straight and level and the bomb automatically released. This further mechanical aid reduces still further the skill needed for dive-bombing.

Although to those being attacked the dive-bomber appears fearsome enough, if they keep their heads and act coolly and methodically the menace can be combated effectively from the ground. The terrifying and demoralising qualities of dive-bombing lie chiefly in the noise—an effect accentuated by the Germans (who understand psychology) by the fitting of piercing whistles to their machines. But as it approaches, a dive-bomber offers a rapidly improving target to the man behind a gun.

Dive-bombing is likely to continue to find a place in air tactics in the future, though its influence is not likely to continue to be so great as it was during the Polish and French campaigns. It is likely to be confined to Army Co-operation and Naval duties and play little part in independent air operations. At present no dive-bombers are in service with the Royal Air Force, although the Fleet Air Arm possesses one type, the Blackburn Skua, the performance of which is slightly lower than that of the Stuka. From America we have obtained ninety Curtiss Helldivers, to be called Clevelands in the British service. These rather antique biplanes are developed from the Curtiss Helldivers of more than ten years ago which, in the U.S. Navy, founded the whole modern technique of dive-bombing copied by the Germans.

GUNS WHICH HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN FOR BRITAIN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: These giant 15-in. guns on a British battleship are being sponged after having been in action. They fire a projectile weighing a ton, and are of the type which bombarded Tobruk from the sea. Beyond the guns, seated on its launching catapult, is one of the battleship seaplanes—a Walrus amphibian, operated by the Fleet Air Arm. These aircraft have become indispensable to the Navy for the purpose of reconnaissance and spotting; they form, in fact, a very important part of every modern battleship's defences

THE WAITING OF EIRE

The Views of De Valera—And the Irish Generally—On the Most Important Irish Problem of To-day

By FERDINAND TUOHY

On right—**IRELAND'S PRESIDENT, DR. DOUGLAS HYDE:** Known in Eire as *An Craoibhin Aoibhinn*, Dr. Hyde is one of the great figures in the Irish literary and political renaissance. He is a literary man turned politician, and became President of Eire in 1938

"IF Hitler descended on Eire, Britain would intervene by land, sea and air and the chances are all that she would evict the Germans, with the result that Britain would control the Irish ports which would determine the Battle of the Atlantic. Better for Hitler than the heavy risk of these ports passing to the enemy, is that they should remain neutrally unavailable to those who set so much store by them. Therefore, Hitler will not descend on Eire. As the British would never take the ports by violence, for fear of antagonising crucial Irish-American opinion, all Eire has to do is rigidly to take no sides and the storm will blow over her."

And thus spake De Valera. Not to me, but, I'd lay my shirt, to his Government colleagues; while in the back of his mind there may have until lately bobbed the culminating thought: "A draw would be best for us, since a victorious England would never stop Partition after the stand I've taken."

However, this is not the time to bait, condemn or argue with Mr. De Valera. If it's cold legality you want, he's got it on his side. Having undertaken to return the ports, Britain, after seventeen years, did so unconditionally. Mr. Chamberlain, as if to clinch a current cattle-coal deal, threw them in in best commercial-traveller style. Mr. Churchill has told us how he protested expertly but in vain: he who has looked so generously upon Ireland for long years.

Such was the position when Mr. De Valera received me at the Dail in August 1936. I had just come from observing Spike Island and Berehaven, and remember remarking to him on the cordiality and hospitality of Irish people to the tiny surviving British detachments. Mr. De Valera agreed that these had borne themselves irreproachably, but, sentiment not being for him, quickly steered back to the main line.

"After the removal of the Governor-General," said he, "the defence monopoly of the British Navy, together with certain facilities of coastal defence and oil fuel, will be the sole remaining fetters on the sovereignty of the Saorstat.

"Ireland is ready to defend her coast so that no foreign country shall ever use her for the base of an attack against England. But the condition of this is the removal of those garrisons or 'defence servitudes.'"

Well, they were removed, unpenetratingly so, for what do we see to-day? Eire has not the weapons or trained numbers to defend her coast and is of herself quite incapable of preventing "a foreign country" from using the national territory for the base of an attack against England. Her only defensive, which takes the form of trying to keep off the bombs by refusing her ports to England, at the same time so endangers the latter as to place it almost in the same category as an actual attack emanating from Eire territory.

Mr. De Valera's own appeal to America for arms, and the parallel regret that England is not supplying Eire with the same, proves that Eire did not realise in practical form what she said she was prepared to do if she got back the ports, and the result is that Eire constitutes the weakest side of British defences. Mr. Lemass might do worse than cogitate that when he declares "We have a right to be neutral if we so decide. We have a right to expect that belligerents will take care to ensure that of the thousands of bombs falling from skies around us, none will fall in our territory."

Mr. Lemass was addressing the Dublin Institute of Journalists, with the usual stuff about the boon of a free Press in a democracy. Actually, there is no free Press in Eire, the censorship there being a blanketing affair, and the way in which the Eire Government has piped down on the whole war, keeping the public in the dark as to the true peril of Nazidom to Eire, constitutes to my mind the most serious charge that can be levelled at Mr. De Valera.

"There is much evidence," broadcasts from Dublin Edward R. Murrow, of the Columbia System, "that more than 90 per cent. of the Irish people want no part in this war and support the Government's policy of neutrality." That must be considerably because the Government keeps the people in the dark with the lights up. Yes, for Eire neutrality reaches even beyond the Swiss exemplar: the Swiss have turned out their lights at Nazi bidding, because they helped the R.A.F. to Italy, but the lights of Dublin, scarcely lowered, beckon the *Luftwaffe* direct Dublinwards, and so like lightning straight back on Merseyside.

In order to reinforce the people of Eire in an adamantine "stay out" frame of mind, the Government behaved with an astonishing improvidence in regard to food, fuel and other supplies, allowing everything to be indulged just as if there hadn't been a war on. To govern is to foresee, and when in times like these a Government abandons foresight for political expediency, it has small case to complain (as if making a sudden discovery) that "Eire is the most blockaded country in Europe."

Eire should be in this war on the side of the human spirit, and of those small nations, among whom she so steadfastly claims full rights, of whom London has become the deliverance centre. She should be in this war because that Faith which means so much to Ireland would be suffered to exist by victorious Nazis only as a means of subjugation, as a political lever, if indeed it were allowed to exist at all, as Cardinal Hinsley has well told Rome. She should be in this war so that it should never be said that Irishmen were afraid of bombs, nor afraid of anything or anybody.

"There are many sad and troubled hearts in Ireland," reports the same Mr. Murrow. "Nearly everyone I have met has a brother, sister, aunt or cousin in Britain, working there or fighting with the British Forces. The personal ties between the two countries are very strong, and the soul of Ireland is troubled." Even, one would hazard, the soul of Mr. De Valera, or why should he cite, when on the explanatory-defensive to America, that "countless men of Irish birth are participating in the naval, aerial and military defence of Britain"?

"Thank you all the same," I hear an echo from Eire, "but if we allowed these ports to be used for the Allied cause Hitler would at once wage war on us and Ireland would become a cockpit."

So much cannot be denied, but how much shorter would last the cockpit if Canadians, Poles ("the Irish of the East"), Free French, were able to install themselves in Eire *before* Hitler was able to get in his stroke. The danger of a long-drawn-out cockpit is precisely that the Nazis may suddenly with massive airborne invasion contrive to dig themselves in at Cobh, Berehaven, Blacksod, Lough Swilly, and on Baldonnel and Ryanna airfields, as they successfully did at Stavanger, Trondjhem and Narvik, and with Irish Quislings to greet them. The whole of a Westphalian regiment, 1,500 men, was landed from seaplanes in three hours in Oslo Fjord—and what vast inland water spaces does Eire offer maybe to a fleet of aerial-trailers!

The whole matter is one of speed, and Eire's attitude risks the Allies coming in too late to prevent a Nazi grip on Ireland that might not last long, but could be made to endure sufficiently to enable Hitler to make grievous inroads with his sea war. It is because I have long thought it likely that Hitler might attempt a stroke to the westward, west of the line Cherbourg-Belfast, that I look anxiously in Ireland's direction. For what does grand strategy command Hitler to do in the present circumstance, if he does any invading at all, than attempt to cut us off from America and from American supplies?

Many in Eire reckon that Hitler will lay off their country because if he did the other thing, in would come America into the war under the irresistible impulsion of the Irish-Americans. Yet that could prove false reckoning. For my part, I believe that if Hitler thought he could conquer Britain this year by lashing out to the westward and taking in Eire, he would not let the fear of America coming in deter him.

So what? So this: notwithstanding, Britain's best hope in regard to the ports resides in those Irish-Americans. As has been rightly said, they constitute De Valera's constituents—15,000,000 of them—every bit as much as the Irish in Eire, perhaps more so, since De Valera has to explain things to them. The Irish-Americans are democratic Roosevelt backers to a man: remember that. And bear in mind too that they inhabit a country which has come to see the Nazi peril steadily and whole. If the Irish in Eire do not fear the Nazis, the Irish in America do.

The Irish-Americans, so many of them in the U.S. Navy, as were their seniors a generation ago when the "bhoys" did such splendid work sub-chasing from Blacksod and Queenstown, feel the call of the Irish ports rather more than somewhat. It has sunk in that Galway is as important to American security as Bermuda. In the slang of the day, the Irish-Americans increasingly want their kinsfolk in Eire to "come clean" in the Atlantic. It would indeed be strange if the Americans failed to make their views felt should American aid to Britain, so openly linked with the defence of America, only be increasingly sunk as a result of imperative port facilities being denied the intended recipients.

If the United States entered the war, Mr. De Valera would lease the Irish ports to Washington the next day. That I quite believe. But, if the United States do not enter the war in the next decisive eight months, can we hope for nothing more from Mr. De Valera than a reiterated blank refusal? We can hope that the best pair of men that fate could have given us for the job in hand, Roosevelt and Churchill, backed by such forthright customers as Willkie, may bring De Valera to another way of thinking. The only grim hazard is—can it be done soon enough?

So much undergrowth requires to be cut through before getting to the people of Eire. To give just one example, though a capital one, they ask, "Where are the A.-A. guns or the fighters for our protection?" No one to impress upon them that anti-aircraft defences would be rushed to the menaced centres, and not least from America. No one to point out that British fighters could fly to the main battle areas over Eire, as they did to Dunkirk. Nor anyone to emphasise that the 700- to 1,000-miles return flights upon which the Nazi bombers would have to engage, would be far from leading to such repeated bombing as that of London from Northern France, a 225-miles return flight. No one, finally, to call attention to the fact that Eire is not a bombable place, that outside of Dublin and Cork the unrelieved run of small towns would be hard to locate by night, and that into the bargain most of the population lives outside even those small towns.

IRELAND'S UNCOMPROMISING PRIME MINISTER, EAMON DE VALERA: Despite his intense "nationalism," Mr. De Valera is the son of a Spanish father and was born in New York; his Irish origin comes only from his mother! His record is fascinating—he was a Commandant in the Irish National Insurrection in 1916; sentenced to death, he was, however, released in the general amnesty of June 1917; he was again imprisoned in May 1918, but escaped from Lincoln Gaol in February 1919, whereupon he went to America and raised a loan of six million dollars for the Irish Republican Government. From 1917 to 1926 he was President of Sinn Fein; since 1937 he has been Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs of the Irish Free State. He was also President of the Council of the League of Nations in September and October 1932, and President of the Assembly in 1938. He is fifty-seven years of age

THE FIRST STAGE AFTER TOBRUK: CLIMBING TO DERNA

Where the Forces to Attack Derna Diverged from the Lower Road

When the "mopping-up" had been completed at Tobruk during January 24-25, an advance was made to the west and south-west. The force moving to the west took the roads and tracks leading to Derna, 95 miles to the north-west of Tobruk. It is this area which is shown in diagrammatic bird's-eye fashion above. The main metalled road follows the coast area, with a turning off to the right connecting with Bomba, a small place with a harbour of no great size in the north-western corner of the Gulf of Bomba. Other tracks lead upwards to the higher ground, which, at its further side, overlooks the long gully leading down to Derna town and harbour. On the way to the successful action against Derna the troops passed Martuba air-field, where a number of out-of-action Italian planes litter the ground. After the fall of Derna on January 30, the roads leading westwards became the centre of action. One leads to Appolonia and the other Greek and Roman cities, the most interesting portion of all Libya; and another, farther from the sea, runs to Benghazi by way of Slonta

JARABUB, WHERE AN ITALIAN GARRISON HAS PUT UP A RESISTANCE

It is here that the Tenets of the Senussi, Strictest Order of Muhammadanism, are Taught

This view of Jarabub, or Giarabub, taken from the air, shows the zawia or university centre of Senussidom, which lies some 130 miles south of Tobruk. It was at first thought that the local garrison had completely surrendered to a surprise attack by a small British force, but this news appeared to be premature. Some of the outlying defences may have been pressed back, but the garrison, at the time of writing, had not surrendered. Jarabub is a remarkable spot; at one time it was the headquarters of the Senussi Order, before the defensive attitude of that order suggested a move still farther into the desert. Kufra then became the headquarters and Jarabub continued as a teaching centre, and until the penetration of the Libyan Desert by the Italians it had masters and scholars, with halls and long rooms answering in some sort to universities in other countries. The white building is the mosque, the central building of the settlement. The surrounding structures are arranged round courtyards, the whole being erected for the purposes of the Senussi brethren. On the right-hand side there is a natural depression, flights of steps leading down from the zawia to the palm gardens occupying the right-hand foreground. The few houses built outside the main central block were the only evidence of a civil population, when this picture was taken. Outside the precincts of Jarabub, the desert stretches away on every hand, a track to the east leading towards Siwa and one to the west to Aujila

THE THRUST INTO ERITREA LEADING TO THE CAPTURE OF AGORDAT AND THE ITALIAN RETREAT TO CHEREN

When the Italians retreated from Kassala in the Sudan border district, their rearward movement did not stop at the Eritrean frontier. Last week the official news stated that "After being kept on the run in Eritrea, Italy's oldest colony, for ten days, in which they had retreated more than 100 miles from the Sudan, the Italians were trying at last to prepare to make a stand." This was on a line between Agordat, 90 miles from the border, and Barentu, 35 miles to the south-west. Agordat, a town on the only railway in Eritrea, was protected with barbed-wire entrenchments, but it fell to the British forward movement on February 1, and on Monday it was stated that the Italians were in full retreat to Cheren (or Karen, as it is also spelt). In the above bird's-eye view, the spectator is looking northwards across the Eritrean-Abyssinian frontier, with Kassala on the west and the line of the Italian retreat stretching through Agordat, Cheren, and possibly beyond

THE TYPE OF COUNTRY ROAD BUILT BY THE ITALIANS : Besides the main trunk road carrying the motor coach service between Asmara and Addis Ababa, the Italians have occupied their time in Abyssinia in improving the native roads, and in making some entirely new ones where necessary. This one between Axum (of the stone pillars) and Adowa is typical of the latter type, which necessitate hairpin bends

WHERE THE ERITREAN CAVALRY ARE HOUSED AT CHEREN : Cheren, towards which the Italians were retreating on February 3, is a position on the railway to Massawa—it will be found on the bird's-eye view given above. The surrounding district is somewhat lower than that of Asmara and its temperature is hotter. Cheren (or Karen or Keru) itself is surrounded by hills. The buildings shown here house the Eritrean native cavalry

INNOVATION IN ABYSSINIA AFFECTS THE NATIVE HUT : Before the coming of the Italians, the Abyssinian hut was round and built of straw and other easily obtainable material. Nowadays it is still round, but no longer made of straw—at least as far as military and official hutments are concerned. The above view shows how the Askaris are provided with circular residences of concrete with embattled edges. New buildings, on the European style, have also been erected in the streets of Addis Ababa

WHERE ERITREA TOUCHES ABYSSINIA SOUTH-WEST OF MASSAWA : Senafé is typical of a good number of Eritrean frontier posts, with hills of moderate height increasing in abruptness and singularity of form as the traveller proceeds southwards. Only a few patches of land can be farmed. Near Senafé, there is one point where the plateau falls away sheer for several thousand feet into a valley about five miles wide

THE PENETRATION OF ERITREA

How British Troops have Captured Agordat and Continued to Advance along the Railway to Massawa and Threaten Gondar

THE OLD FORT AND TOWN AT MAKALE, THREATENED BY THE ADVANCE FROM METEMMA: The name figures largely on maps of Abyssinia, but actually the place is comprised merely of a largish old castle residence with a walled compound. The reader can see it in the background of the above view—taken during the Italian "occupation" in 1936

A PROBLEM OF WIDE FRONTIERS: HOW ERITREA AND ABYSSINIA LOOK TO G.H.Q. WHEN DETERMINING WHERE TO ATTACK

The north-western frontier line, stretching from Tokar in the Red Sea area to Akobo post in the Southern Sudan, measures 750 miles. From Akobo to Lake Rudolf is another 292 miles and from the lake to Muddo Erri is a further 390 miles. At the present moment, successful advances have been made in Eritrea towards the Eritrean capital at Metemma, towards Gondar. On the southern border, the constant skirmishes have driven nearly every Italian out of the North Kenya Province. It would seem that a stand might be made on the high ground south of Addis Ababa. Harar province would probably prove too unfriendly. Means of entry into Abyssinia west of the capital have been few. The route along the Dadessa River was not easy. It remains to be seen how far new routes have been cut into this south-west sector of the country. The easterly tip of Italian Somaliland is continued in a smaller map

AN ITALIAN-BUILT BRIDGE SPANNING AN ABYSSINIAN RIVER: The Italian authorities love making new ways through any kind of country. Cement is brought up in the necessary quantities and the new bridge duly constructed and properly labelled. Good roads mean increased motor traffic and petrol—of which latter Abyssinia is short

THROUGH THE FANTASTIC MOUNTAIN SCENERY OF THE DEBRA TABOR: Determined to make Addis Ababa independent of the French-owned railway to Djibouti, the Italians put in a great amount of work to get a through route from the capital to Massawa on the Red Sea. The metalled road (a much longer route) is now complete

THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF AT WORK AT HIS DESK IN WHITEHALL

Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal served in the last war as a despatch-rider, observer, and finally pilot—winning the M.C., D.S.O. and a bar to the D.S.O. Since then he has served in many key positions in the R.A.F., ending up as Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Bomber Command, before succeeding Sir Cyril Newall as Chief of the Air Staff in Whitehall, in virtual command of all air operations in all theatres of war. Sir Charles Portal was educated at Winchester and at Christ Church, Oxford; he entered the last war at the age of twenty-one in 1914. Later, from 1934-5, he commanded the British forces at Aden; then he became Instructor at the Imperial Defence College, Director of Organisation at the Air Ministry, and Air Member for Personnel on the Air Council. He is now forty-seven years of age, and a dynamic director of a dynamic fighting arm

AIR COMMENTARY—By C. G. GREY
(Founder of "The Aeroplane")

THE AIR WAR on the GROUND

The Waffs and the Woffs—and Saluting; What the Observer Corps does for Us—and What the Air Ministry doesn't for them . . .

JUST for a change, after being for weeks the complete optimist, and the regular purveyor of what the Communist Defeatists call "sunshine talk" calculated to uplift the hearts of the Populace, I want to have a real good grouse *à l'Anglais*, or *more Anglico*, as Saint Augustine might have said. In fact, I want two grouses, one for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, and one for the Observer Corps—two excellent, essential and not-properly-valued branches of the Royal Air Force. And, being a trifle old-fashioned and conservative I propose to stick to the old adage "Ladies First,"—not the Lifeboat motto, "Women and Children First."

Incidentally, many of us would like to know why, as these ladies were officially the Women's *Royal* Air Force in the last war, they are mere Auxiliaries in this war. Auxiliary means helpful, and they are more than that, they are essential. Are they not good enough or loyal enough to be Royal this time? .. This grouse has to do with the salutability of W.A.A.F. officers. I see by the papers, as Mr. Tooley of Chicago used to say, that a Group Captain, R.A.F., or Stationmaster, as the C.O.s of R.A.F. Stations sometimes like to be called, has raised quite a storm by issuing an *Order* to his station that Other Ranks shall salute W.A.A.F. officers. Apparently the Air Ministry Regulation is that Other Ranks need not salute a W.A.A.F. officer unless so disposed, but that they *must* address her as "Ma'am," when speaking to her—just as if she were of Royal blood, or their personal employer.

Now, the state of mind of the airman or N.C.O. who will say Ma'am to a W.A.A.F. officer when talking (or taking an order) and will not salute her is queer. Can one imagine the most boorish lout of a general labourer, let alone a well-educated Trade Union member in good standing, who would not take off his hat to a woman after speaking to her, or if he met a woman whom he knew? And as men in uniform do not take off their hats, then the only and obvious thing to do is to salute.

"Manners Makyth Man," as John of Wykeham said centuries ago, and as the motto of Winchester College, founded by him, says to-day. And a man without manners isn't worth much.

A lot of tosh has got into print about N.C.O.s and men saluting the King's Commission when they salute an officer in uniform, and about sailors, when they salute the quarter-deck, saluting an imaginary crucifix which used to be there before the days of Martin Luther, or Henry VIII. But the fact is that saluting is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace—as the Collect says.

I imagine that the most ruffianly captain of Condottieri in the Middle Ages insisted on his men saluting smartly and properly, as evidence that they were properly disciplined. And without proper discipline no fighting force is worth a hang. Even though a man may know that an officer is a thug or a tough or a criminal, the man must salute so long as the other is an officer in authority over him. How necessary, therefore, that any decent N.C.O. or man should salute a woman officer, partly because she is an officer to whom authority has been given by the same powers which gave authority to his men officers, although without the King's Commission, and partly, or chiefly, because she is a woman?

Years ago a noble friend of mine told me with amazement that he had been walking accidentally with a newly rich acquaintance, when they met a smartly dressed young woman, to whom my friend took off his hat. The rich man asked archly who was his lady friend? The nobleman explained that she was his upper housemaid. Said the rich bounder, "D'you mean to say that you salute your *servants*?"

I think that our friend the Group Captain, in his properly chivalrous regard for his W.A.A.F. officers, took upon himself to issue an order when he might have got better results by a gently satirical "Notice To All Ranks."

One of the earliest of my childhood's lessons in the use of tact was a notice-board at the gate of the very beautiful garden of a hotel in the Vale of Avoca—"There's not in the whole World a valley so sweet, As that vale in whose bosom the fair waters meet", as Tom Moore sang. On the board were the words—"Ladies and gentlemen *will* not, and others *must* not, pluck the flowers in this garden." And, of course, nobody did; not even in Ireland, where petty larceny is the national industry.

Now if the Group Captain had worded his notice—"Officers and Gentlemen will salute all W.A.A.F. officers. Cads need not," there would have been an epidemic of Saluter's Elbow, instead of a row the intensity of which, though on a smaller scale, rivalled that caused by Colonel Bingham's rather too outspoken opinion of War Officers.

Which recalls the curious difference in the Household Cavalry, by which the notices to one regiment begin, "Officers and Gentlemen of the Life Guards" and to the other begin, "Officers and Troopers of the Royal Horse Guards." Or did, not many years ago.

Evidently the N.C.O.s and men at that station are not so appreciative as was one of the Veteran Reserve, or whatever is the proper title of the old gentlemen who wear South African medals (I refuse to believe a friend who says that one who was wearing the Waterloo medal presented muskets to him) and guard the precincts of our aerodromes so ferociously.

At that station there was a very pretty and smart and small W.A.A.F. officer who one evening came back to the station after dark and was promptly challenged by a tough old sentry, with: "'Alt! 'Oo goes there." "Friend," said the little W.A.A.F. gently. "Advance, friend, and be reckernised," said the sentry, and the W.A.A.F. advanced into the light of the lantern at the gate.

The sentry took a good look at her, presented arms with a bang, and remarked, "And a *very* nice little friend too!"—Now, I hold that, tough and all as he was, that sentry was a gentleman.

Also I admit that all W.A.A.F. officers are not so salutable as that. Most of them are amazingly good, and they are hand picked with great skill and knowledge. But there have been instances, especially at the start, in which influence was worth more than merit. And that goes for some of the men officers too, outside of those who do the flying.

Consequently some W.A.A.F. detachments are better run than others. Some are badly fed. Some are over-fed. At one station there is a daily bill of fare which no able-bodied man could tackle, but the girls are not allowed time in which to eat enough to keep them from being hungry. At another they are bundled off to work in trucks and back, and have no organised games or time for exercise. But I have been told that an administrative comb-out is going on. So we may hope for better things.

By the way—how do you pronounce W.A.A.F.? Most of my W.A.A.F. friends call it Waff—to rhyme with the American word laff, which we spell laugh. But lately I asked a telephone lady whether I might send a telegram to a "W.A.A.F." (letter by letter) Officers' Mess at a certain R.A.F. "Head Quarters." Scornfully she replied, "Oh, you mean Woff Officer Mess, R.A.F. H.Q.,"—pronouncing Woff to rhyme with cough. Humbly I assented. She rewarded me with the information that any Service address in a telegram, no matter how many words are in it, is charged as five words—Not everybody knows that.

Later an exalted Waff officer agreed that Woff is rather affected by the younger smart set in the W.A.A.F.

Now let us consider the Observer Corps. I suppose that most people know that these heroic and stoic people sit day and night, in relays, watching with eye and ear for E.A., otherwise enemy aircraft. Their posts are as much out in the wide open spaces

CONVERSATION PIECE—1941 STYLE: A GLIMPSE INTO THE HATCH OF A WHITLEY LONG-RANGE BOMBER, SHOWING THE FIRST AND SECOND PILOTS AND THE NAVIGATOR AND A FEW OF THE MANY CONTROLS OF THE AIRCRAFT. THEY ARE ABOUT TO START FOR OPERATIONS OVER GERMANY

as may be, to get away from noises of ground traffic. Consequently they exist largely on exposed plains and downs and moors and wolds and heaths and fells and bens and braes and such places.

Each post has its telephone to an R.A.F. station, and from their messages Waff, or Woff, "plotters" keep tab at Fighter Command H.Q. on the movements of every aircraft which moves across the country. As the Observers are warned of the approach of our own machines they can be fairly sure whether anything that comes along is an enemy or not. And from their reports our fighters, by day or night, are told in very quick time of the whereabouts of enemy machines.

Thus the members of the Observer Corps are the eyes and ears of the R.A.F. And one does not need high intelligence to see how valuable and praiseworthy they are, or how much they would deserve consideration and rewards if they were members of his Majesty's Regular Armed Forces. But they are not, so they get nothing.

The Observer Corps was organised by Major-General E. B. Ashmore, R.A., R.F.C. and R.A.F.—commonly known as "Splash"—when he was appointed to organise and command the London Air Defence Area in 1918. The L.A.D.A. also developed such an effective balloon-barrage, gun-barrage, and night-fighter patrol system, that German air raids ceased in March 1918. "Splash" was the star turn at Woolwich and at the Staff College in his time, and the L.A.D.A.'s success was the result.

In 1926 when Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, as Chief of the Air Staff, and Sir Samuel Hoare as Air Minister, were trying to rebuild the R.A.F. after its size was cut by 90 per cent. in 1919 by Mr. Churchill; then Air Minister, the Observer Corps was brought into being again, and its volunteer members were enrolled as Special Constables. When Air Chief Marshal Sir ohn Salmond became C.A.S., and frankly told the people that "some of the bombers would always get through," the)bserver Corps became more important nd numerous, but seemingly no more orthy of consideration.

At the beginning of this war the O.C. became a separate organisation irectly under the Air Ministry. Its mem-ers are business men, manual labourers, rmhands, all sorts, who undertake to do enty-four hours' sky-watching a week; plus a few en on full-time duty at £3 5s. a week.

As the Observer Corps is the essential intelligence rvice of the Fighter Command, R.A.F., which is e primary protection of Great Britain against air vasion, one would expect that the Corps would ve a definite status as a branch of the R.A.F. on least the same level as the Home Guard, Police eserve, and Auxiliary Fire Service, in relation to heir respective Regular Services.

In practice, the Observer Corps seems to be egarded as a kind of lower-class A.R.P. affair, and he members have no status, uniform or equipment. pparently as an act of charity, the Government, hich means presumably the Air Ministry, allow each ost a few cheap raincoats and pairs of gum boots—all of large size, so that the big men can be sure of etting into them. The little men look figures of un such as are not consonant with the dignity of iembers of our first line of protection.

Men coming on duty often push bicycles for miles r foot-slog through rain and snow, to have a leaky raincoat and dud gum boots handed to them, and then stand out in the open for anything up to eight hours at a stretch. How can any man be efficient when treated that way?

Naturally the men who can afford to do so buy proper weatherproof kit, or the better-to-do members provide for the others. The Corps is keen enough to do for itself what a mean, and at the same time recklessly extravagant, Government will not do for it.

Certain units carry rifles, and as such must surely rank with the Home Guard. Each such unit has issued to it *seven* suits of cotton overalls—such as garage hands wear—which are swopped from man to man regardless of size. Those on duty are supposed to get into these if enemy troops are seen in the offing, or upping. This skimpy cotton stuff is useless against wet, it isn't a uniform, and, except in hot weather, the men would have to wear waterproofs over it.

The officers of the Observer Corps have to wear what is in effect an R.A.F. uniform without badges. But they have no status as commissioned officers and so Service personnel have been warned that they *must not salute* these officers—so they are evidently lower down than a Waff, or Woff, officer, to whom a salute is optional. A while back I had the honour of being introduced to the officer commanding a Group or Area or something of Observers. He had about four rows of medal ribbons, and on that evidence of services rendered to his King and Country must have been twice as saluteworthy as any of my young friends among our Air Vice-Marshals.

To say that an R.A.F. corporal must not salute such a man is just fatuous. Most A.V.-M.s would salute the achievements behind those medals.

But leaving that out of the argument, an officer on whose intelligence, organising ability, and power of command, depends the working of a body of men whose accuracy and efficiency direct our fighter squadrons is surely worthy of the respect which fighting men have to show to ex-Fleet Street reporters who are employed in toting bunches of pressmen round R.A.F. stations.

These are only the basic facts about the Depressed Class, or Untouchables, known as the Observer Corps. There are plenty of consequent grievances which are equally a disgrace to hte Air Ministry or Treasury, For instance :—

Only a small percentage of the men have steel helmets. Service type gas-masks issued are obsolete, although all civilian gas-masks were brought up to date months ago.

If injured on duty a man can draw his pay for eight weeks and is then sacked without pension or compensation. And although members are treated as civilians by the Air Ministry, the insurance companies refuse to insure them.

An entirely new staff was recently organised, and new officers were appointed from outside the Corps. No appointments were offered to those already serving in the Corps.

There has been practically no organised training of observers, unless one can call the issue of almost useless photographs to help recognition a part of training. Therefore, many of the keenest Observer Posts have formed "Hearkers' Clubs" outside the Corps to teach identification and to hold examinations to test the efficiency of the posts.

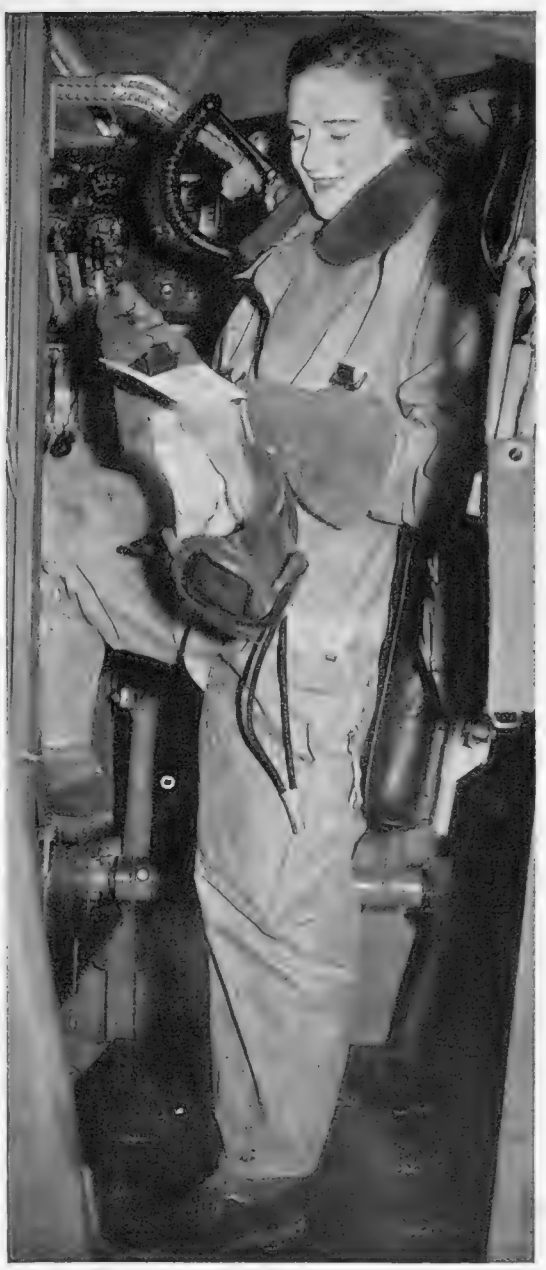
There are lots of other grievances, too many to mention here, and some inadvisable to make public. But the evident fact remains that the Observer Corps should be put on a proper footing—worthy of its importance to the R.A.F. and to the British Nation.

First of all, a regular officer of the R.A.F., of at least the rank of Air Vice-Marshal, should be appointed Commandant. Many less important commands in the R.A.F. have such exalted officers in charge. And considering that officers of the old Air Defence Cadet Corps and of the new Air Training Corps held and hold the King's Commission, surely the Observer Corps officers should be of equal account. And the Observer Corps itself should be recognised as one of the most important branches of the Fighting Forces of the King.

AT HER OFFICE DESK, MISS WILLIAMS EXAMINES HER BLUE-PRINTS, LOOKING VERY WORKMANLIKE IN HER OVERALLS

MISS WILLIAMS AT THE TOWING-WINCH OF A TARGET-TOWING MACHINE

Miss Bronwen Williams, a pretty brunette in her early twenties, is employed by the Ministry of Aircraft Production on experimental work at a British aerodrome. Her duties take her up in all kinds of aircraft, and already she has a considerable number of flying hours to her credit. Recently, while testing flares, one caught on fire in the machine, but Miss Williams's prompt action with an extinguisher averted the danger of a burnt-out aircraft. Previous to her present work, Miss Williams was a supervisor in the advertising department of a big firm



IN THE COCKPIT OF A BOMBER, MISS WILLIAMS MAKES NOTES OF HER OBSERVATIONS

VARIORUM.—A writer on another page of this week's issue of THE SPHERE makes a good point when he says that the pilots of the German *Stuka* dive-bombers need less training than do the crews of the big long-range bombers. He suggests that they are picked from the youngest, most daring, and most enthusiastic of *Luftwaffe* personnel. Certainly if one is going to hold one's machine straight for a ship's deck in the face of anti-aircraft pom-poms, if one has already escaped being shot down by the fighters above, one does need to be a bit of a fanatic. There cannot be any of the "he who fights and runs away lives to fight another day" tactic about dive-bombing.

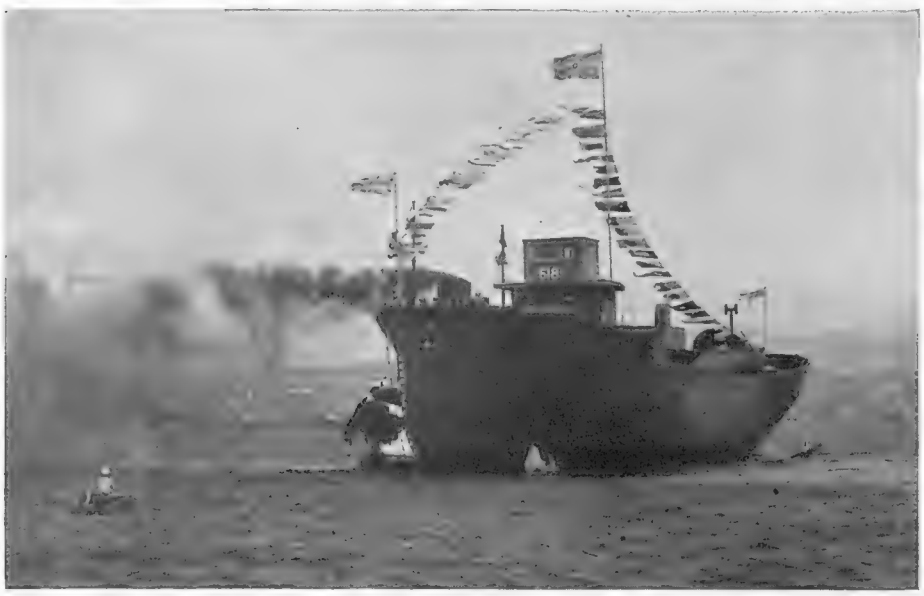
Tales from Holland tell of nervousness among the young parachute troops in training there, "some of them less than seventeen years of age." That seems likely. But I wish we knew whether these youngsters are volunteers or are just told off by numbers for the job. A suicide squad of conscripts does not sound formidable, but real desperadoes on such a job might be nasty to tackle.

Events at Malta are likely to be worth watching in these next few weeks. If the Germans push in a full-power attack with dive-bombers and parachute troops their losses will be terrific. We may assume that our Forces have enough troops and guns to deal with German parachutists. The question is how many fighters we can park in the space available on Malta to tackle the German aeroplanes.

The coast of Libya is too far away for our short-range fighters to work from Italian aerodromes there. Derna is 500 miles from Malta. Benghazi is 450 miles, and we are not there yet, at the time of writing. Tripoli is 200 miles from Malta, and that is a long range over which to ask present-day fighters to operate, and the battle over Malta will be done before General Wavell can get to Tripoli, even if unopposed at Benghazi.

So far as Malta is concerned, the chief use of our victories in Cyrenaica is that they make safer the passage of troop-transports and supplies from Alexandria, because R.A.F. escorts can protect them along the coast all the way to Benghazi, and, on the other hand, the Italians have no bases for submarines or aeroplanes from which to attack them.

THE "RAT-CATCHERS OF THE NAVY"—A STEAM TRAWLER PUTTING OUT TO SEA FOR A SPELL OF DUTY ON PATROL



THE ENEMY OF THE SUBMARINE—THE LAUNCH OF A CORVETTE IN CANADA: The corvette is a new type of warship (which takes its name from an older type, once prominent in the Royal Navy) now being built on mass-production lines both in this country and in the Dominions. They will be used to fight the U-boats and escort our convoys in the Atlantic. They are fitted with anti-submarine gear and have an armament sufficient for their job. These ships are of the whale-catcher type and are good sea boats, though somewhat lively in a seaway. They are somewhat smaller than destroyers, and they have a complement of four officers and a ship's company of between fifty and sixty

IN THE MESS-ROOM OF A "RAT-CATCHER." WHILE SOME OF THE CREW ARE AT LUNCH, OTHERS ENJOY A WELL-EARNED REST. NOTE THE MANNER IN WHICH EVERY INCH OF SPACE IN THE SMALL VESSEL IS UTILISED

THE COMPLICATED ARRAY OF INSTRUMENTS ON THE BRIDGE OF A MODERN SUBMARINE: When submarines were first armed with guns in addition to their tubes, they were made to hinge down into watertight lockers under the deck. This mounting reduced the range and efficiency of the gun and in the early days of the last war the Navy risked mounting the gun in the open and found that the sea-water did it no harm at all. It is, of course, fitted with a tompion and a breech-plug to prevent the water getting inside the barrel. Similarly, all the fittings in the conning-tower which would come to any harm by salt water—as few as possible—are made to unship without a moment's delay and pass through the conning-tower hatch. Everything possible is left standing and duplicated inside the hull

OFFICERS LUNCHING IN THE WARDROOM, FORMERLY THE FISH-HOLD OF THE TRAWLER: Much has been written about the "Greyhounds of the Fleet," as the motor torpedo-boat destroyers and light cruisers have been called; but not so much of the rat-catching terriers of the Navy—the trawlers. Every day in all kinds of weather they go out on patrol, sweeping mines, hunting U-boats and guarding convoys which bring home Britain's supplies. These small craft are commanded by Lieutenants of the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve or skippers. In the wardrooms are to be found officers from many walks of life—Mercantile Marine officers, architects, journalists, engineers, advertising experts, business managers, etc.; their ages range from nineteen to forty. The pictures reproduced here were taken on a fishing trawler which is now on anti-submarine duty

BIG SHIPS and LITTLE SHIPS

From Small "Rat-catcher" to Big Warship on Active Service at Sea

BACK FROM PATROL UNDER ARCTIC CONDITIONS : An indication of the weather conditions under which many vessels of the Royal Navy have to operate whilst out on patrol in the Atlantic in the winter. The foot-long icicles are still there, despite that this picture was taken after her arrival in a British port. Note the cold-weather equipment worn by the sailor

TRAWLER'S CREW WHO SHOT DOWN A GERMAN BOMBER : A Junkers 88 bomber which attacked H.M. Trawler *Galvani* was driven off and so badly damaged that it crashed soon afterwards on the Norfolk coast. The bomber's crew of four were captured by two civilians. This picture of the crew was taken after the trawler had returned safely to port. Skipper M. P. Peck, the trawler's commanding officer, is the second from the left

LIFE ON BOARD ONE OF THE "LITTLE SHIPS" : Despite the uncomfortable conditions caused by the great economy of space in some of the smaller vessels of the Navy, the crews of these ships often lead a merry life. The whole secret lies, of course, in adaptability : if allowances are made for individual idiosyncrasies clashes of temperament can be avoided !

AN IMPRESSIVE VIEW, TAKEN JUST FORWARD OF THE BRIDGE, ON THE MODERN BRITISH CRUISER "MANCHESTER" : This vessel belongs to the same class as the *Southampton*, recently hit and subsequently lost in the action off Sicily, when dive-bombers made their first serious attack on the Mediterranean Fleet. *Manchester* was laid down at the Hawthorn yards in 1936 ; she was launched in April 1937 and completed in August 1938. All the vessels of her class have a displacement of 9,100 tons, a length of 591 ft. overall, and carry a complement of 700 : they are armed with twelve 6-in. guns, as well as a strong anti-aircraft armament. The speed of the *Manchester* is over 32 knots. The bridge of the cruiser, with its forward turrets, makes a very pleasing picture to the naval eye. Noteworthy features of the ships of the "Southampton" class are the raking funnels and masts and the tripod mounting. In peacetime this particular vessel was painted all white, and made a brave sight with her delicate architecture

ON BOARD A BRITISH DESTROYER AT SEA IN ROUGH WEATHER : Rolling and pitching as it punches forward through heavy seas, the destroyer continues its ceaseless watch on merchantmen making for a British port. In wartime the work of the destroyer is never-ceasing : there is always work for her to do, and she stays at sea for long periods on end, no matter what the weather

AN ESCAPE FROM THE WAR

The Boasts of Heraldry; The Lure of Murder Trials; and Barchester Once More

"A LANG PEDIGREE."—To what extent is a deep interest in one's ancestry a weakness—mere snobbery—and to what extent a genuine scientific interest in heredity? I often ask myself that question. The College of Heralds supports itself largely on that (healthy or unhealthy) interest, for Heralds earn fees for unravelling the pedigrees of obscure persons who come to them from the least likely places—from America and Canada and Australia, where "men are men" and not names, and where class distinctions are said to be less in evidence than in (pre-war) Britain.

When a new man "emerges," makes his name from nothing "off his own bat," sooner or later someone (he himself or an admirer) will begin to interest himself in that man's ancestry, even before the bestowal of a title upon him makes the research more or less inevitable to the compilers of peerages and baronetages. This love of ancestry has always been rife all over the world—and chiefly perhaps in Japan and Germany.

Oddly enough, there is more hypocrisy about it in Britain than in Japan and Germany. For generations Englishmen have affected to scoff at ancestry and long pedigrees, but the College of Heralds has continued to rake in fees.

Thus, Sydney Smith guillotined a discussion on ancestors with: "Mine all disappeared after the Summer Assizes—and no questions were asked." And his great-grandson, Sydney, Lord Knutsford, dismissed the subject in his autobiography with "except for one suspected of forgery, they were quite respectable."

Yet both men had a scientific interest in heredity and acknowledged its potential effects on character. Another Smith, the first Earl of Birkenhead, chose for his motto, *Faber fortunæ meæ*, but I believe his daughter has a genuine scientific interest in her ancestry.

For my part, I have always been interested in pedigrees, and am only too ready to recognise traits of character and facial resemblances handed down from forbears to their remote descendants—an innocent and very genuine source of interest. If you seek a classic instance of the powers of heredity in faithful reproduction of features, go and look (when you next can do so) at that picture of the Elizabethan Commission (in the National Portrait Gallery) which sat to determine certain questions arising out of the wars with Spain. In that picture, *living* Cecils and Cavendishes sit round the board in ruffs and trunks.

I see romance in every pedigree, and not only those which display illustrious forbears. The pure yeoman-stock ancestry of many illustrious "self-made" men to-day is purer romance and throws a brighter light on English history and social history and traditions. (I referred recently to Lord Brassey's and to Lord Nuffield's pedigrees.)

After all, we all of us go back to Methuselah or Adam. It is only a question of research, and parish registers are the chief clue-givers. I remember an old cab-driver in Southern England who drove his shandrydan under the shadow of the ruined castle of which his noble Elizabethan ancestor had been Governor and Constable. He had no knowledge of the fact himself, but his family tree was clear as print, and he was as like as two peas in face to the original of the Holbein in the town hall.

A "Good Murder."—A recent article of mine in THE SPHERE evoked a most entertaining correspondence with one or two legal and medico-legal lights of fame living in Edinburgh and elsewhere, among them a very well-known London Coroner. The subject was started by a chance reference to Madeline Smith, who, generations back, secured in Edinburgh a "non-proven" verdict on the charge of murdering her lover, Angelier. She is dead, and to-day her latter career is more interesting, because less well known, than the salient facts and queries of her famous trial. Some of the features of our symposium I will collate and set forth:—

1. How strange it seems to-day to recall that once we lived in an age when a "good" murder trial could hold the interest of the whole nation and fill the chief columns of every journal in the kingdom and even in the Empire, to the exclusion of every other topic, even political and international.

[*N.B.*—In that Age of the Dodo, there were summer evenings when the bowling of Richardson at the Oval called for special evening editions and crowded out serious features.]

2. How shall we rank the really "good" murders? My symposium-referendum puts them as follows: The Ardlamont murder (Monson), Madeline Smith, Crippen, The Rising Sun, The Green Bicycle. (It reads like a synopsis of Sherlock Holmes stories.) Certainly those named would figure in any "First Dozen" in a ranking list—with no doubt the Bravo, Manning and Palmer cases. These great murders were essentially Victorian and Edwardian features and luxuries. We lost the taste for criminology with the Great War of 1914-18 and never really regained it. Detective fiction began to supply our appetite for the lurid. I think it is fair to say that our interest in great murder trials (possible only in piping times of peace) was decently based. The conflict of evidence and the technique of great criminal advocates are healthily exciting and stimulating matters, and the bloodiness of the crimes took second place. (It was quite otherwise with the William Weare and Burke and Hare cases.)

3, and last. In satisfying our macabre cravings with the brilliant but stereotyped technique of the modern crime-fiction writers, have we shown an advance in culture, or a falling back? My correspondents were mostly old-fashioned lawyers and doctors—and on this question proved *laudatores temporis acti*. Truth, they found, is often stranger and more enthralling than fiction.

BOUND FOR THE SHELTER OF THE FARM: Sheep on their way down from the fells at Borrowdale in the Lake District for shelter during the winter months. The heavy and frequent falls of snow in this district make the task of the shepherd particularly arduous, and he takes the wise precaution of moving his flock down to the sheltered farms in the valleys

Trollope Again.—I have just finished (with intense regret for a big cake eaten) the Barchester novels once more. They provided me with "escape" hours covering three months, for I have less time than usual for reading.

Writing in 1900, William Tinsley said: "No one reads or thinks about Mr. Trollope's novels now. And yet in his time those who in Society had not read his last novel were out of the fashion." That sentence would strike a false note to-day. Trollope is fashionable again, and has been so for twenty years. It is odd to contrast social conditions during his first and his second phases of popularity—the one an era of peace, security and leisure, the other of war, war-rumour, stress, danger, and endless hard work.

If he suited the first, why does he suit the second era, or vice versa? We can dismiss as a half-truth the theory that his posthumous autobiography was responsible for killing his popularity. That frank, humble, de-bunking document *shocked* his admirers and outraged novel fans, but it was a new technique in novel-writing which relegated him to the top shelf—the new movement towards realism. That movement rejected Trollope's methods (which were Thackeray's). No longer must novel characters be exhibited as puppets, with visible strings pulled by the author; no longer must their author display them with patter composed of his personal opinions on politics and morality. They must henceforth be real people, with plausible names and every possible aid to make their history a real-life romance.

In sober fact, Trollope is more realistic than the most acclaimed of realists, because he depicted human nature as it is.

So Trollope went into oblivion, until one day, in a totally new set of conditions, a war-worn, care-ridden, disillusioned public suddenly caught sight, through a locked, rusted gateway, of a garden of peace, showing tangled, untidy rose-gardens and flowering old orchards—and seeing, they broke in and revelled in a world of make-believe, more sane and sensible than any they had known for a decade. And they discovered that the make-believe held more of the *truth* than was to be found in the realism of to-day. And Trollope came back—*Trollopius redux*. When he retires again, we shall be living in a millennium of peace, and only then shall we patronise his "primitive" technique, forget his grand common sense, his glorious sense of proportion, his impartiality, his refusal to dramatise.

J. G.

SHEEP IN FAMOUS SURROUNDINGS: Penned sheep in the shadow of John Greenhouse Farm, Watendlath, on the hills above Borrowdale. This farm is made famous in Sir Hugh Walpole's novel *Judith Paris*

"Both Schweppes, sir"
BY APPOINTMENT TO H.M. THE KING
Schweppes
INDIAN QUININE TONIC
SCHWEPPES
Ginger
Dry & Non-
Schwepp

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

Three Novels in Varied Settings

Yorkshire Sagas and Russian Eccentrics; Mr. Lloyd Douglas's New Book

THERE are some who complain that the regional novelist is too much with us. Late and soon; getting and spending they lay waste their powers; and all that sort of thing.

It is a poor line of criticism. The novels of Trollope or of Hardy do not suffer from the limitations of locality within which those great writers chose to work. Dickens appeared to place no handicaps upon himself in concentrating on the London scene.

I see no point, therefore, in going for Miss Phyllis Bentley because she has written yet another Yorkshire novel. If you happen to be "fed oop" with Yorkshire and the kind of people who live in it; if you know by heart the type of hard-faced, money-grubbing manufacturer, as well as those types of blunt-spoken, not-so-well-off people with hearts of gold who set out to fight him and his evil ways—well, you may have reason to be. You may equally be "fed oop" with grim and grimy towns; with the details of whatever industry happens to be mixed up with the story; even with the much-written-up moors themselves. The test is, having imposed these disabilities upon you, can the novelist *compel* your attention, tell you a good story; entertain you? For I maintain that those are the essentials in any novel.

It is all very well to say that Miss Phyllis Bentley's MANHOLD (Gollancz. 9s. 6d.) is All This and Yorkshire Too. Assuredly it is. It is one of a series, or, in the modern jargon, a saga, of novels in which the threads of the family connections are maintained and, over all, the industrial, social, economic and human history of a particular piece of the West Riding is surveyed in detail.

The point about this particular book is how far the All This succeeds in entertaining us. Our prejudices on the subject of Yorkshire have no more to do with it than that, if they exist, Miss Bentley will break them down by the insistent quality of her tale.

Nevertheless, upon the disliker of all things pertaining to Yorkshire (in which category I am not aware of being included) Miss Bentley imposes a bar to the enjoyment of her story. Upon me she imposes another one, for I neither know her Sam Horsfall, nor am I acquainted with his grand house, Manhold, which I should have been if I had read others of the novels in the saga.

I take leave to dislike sagas for that reason, A novel is a novel. If it is published in six parts, spread out over a number of years, the fact should be clearly stated on each volume. Moreover, it should be a homogeneous whole. If an author publishes a series of books in a sort of loose confederation, each appearing to stand on its own, yet imposing upon the reader the implication that he is already acquainted with certain of its characters and scenes from previous books he may not have read, the author must take the consequences. Those consequences may be fortuitous enough to make him want to go immediately to the other books the better to enjoy this one. More often the result is a kind of frustration which may very well develop into exasperation.

I have read *Manhold*. It is not a good novel. It is not good enough to make me want to go for the other books. It is very much a novelist's novel. The technique is excellent. Plainly it is; and for all to see. But the characters act as the author wants them to act: the action is "made" (ingeniously made, it is true, but if truth is stranger than fiction—which it nearly always is—improbabilities must be invested with the inexorable quality of truth) and there is no real life in it.

By contrast, THE FAMILY, by Nina Fedorova (Collins. 8s. 6d.) is a very different cup of tea. A whole samovar, in fact. I may know, or think I know, all about Yorkshiremen, but Russians, in spite of a long course of them in literature and through the drama, remain a strange and inexplicable race. Their masochistic mysticism; their seemingly unrelated and lightning transitions from inspissated gloom to an almost gossamer gaiety; the interrelation of objectivity with the essential juices of personal relationships. The Anglo-Saxon who pretends to comprehend, let alone understand, these things is either a phoney or else he has travelled, and stayed, a devil of a long way from Bradford.

That is not to say that we do not understand why the Russians swiped the Ballet from the classic settings of Tuscany and posed a standard which the sons and daughters of Ilkley Moor try hard to emulate in North London suburbs. Or why, in two decades, the influence of the great Russians lay heavily upon the output of English fiction (just as potently as the inferior transatlantics lie upon it to-day), and that their influence even crept into the English theatre, much to the discomfiture of the tea-cup dramatists.

We can take note of these things and still receive a salutary jolt from the next Russian we meet.

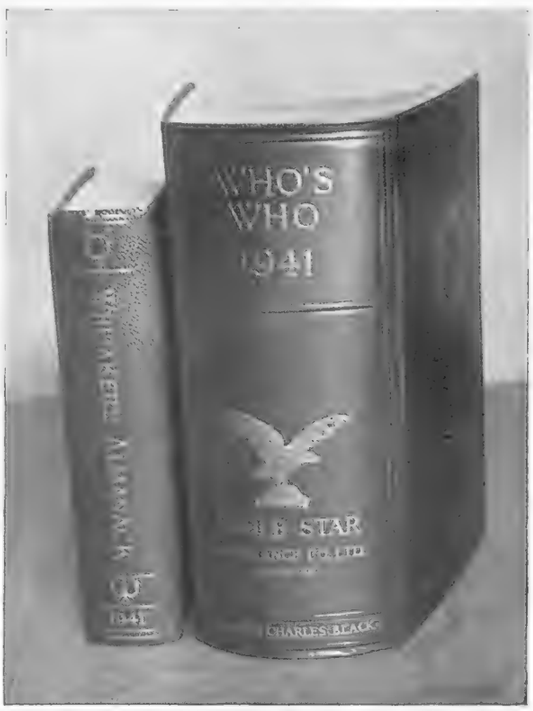
Even from a cursory study of Russian literature the reader might be led to expect a certain line of conduct from the characters of a Russian novel, and that some of them would run to type. Then, as in most of these novels, one realises that they are running off all the pre-conceived rails and living a completely fantastic life of their own. Therein lies the acid test. Conduct, and the motive behind conduct, that produces a sense of the fantastic, is within a hair's breadth of unreality. Consequently, the realisation that these people are not only real, but pulsating with life, must whip the hat off any critic's head.

"The Family," says the author, "was Russian—ex-big, ex-great, ex-prosperous. Having gone through war and revolution, endured poverty and famine and illnesses, occasionally flood and fire and even an earthquake, the Family lost some members, bore others; but the death-rate finally triumphed over the birth-rate, and now they were only five. . . ." Mother kept a boarding-house in Tientsin, in the least fashionable and, therefore, the cheapest corner of the British Concession. The economic position of the Family was uncertain and shaky; moreover, it was based on unstable grounds; its first impetus was to try to earn, and the second, to go without. The second was much easier than the first, because in order to earn it is always necessary to find someone to earn from, while going without is strictly one's own affair. But the Family had its compensations. They loved each other with a deep tenderness. "The Family was not chained to the pettiness of its humdrum existence. Tears and laughter, joy and sorrow, philosophy and a good joke—they had a generous share of everything."

Now there is nothing particularly fantastic about that, except, perhaps, the enduring tenderness, which is rare enough in family life to be remarked by an Anglo-Saxon. What *is* fantastic is the procession of the extraordinary characters who come, as lodgers, to share their corporate life. Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Besarabian, English; some of them poor, some socially outcast; all of them extraordinary. In each of them the Family has a personal interest; each is drawn into the intensity of the Family's life.

For the period of their sojourn with the Family, each of these oddities becomes woven into the pattern of its life; a pattern of pathos tinged with irresistible humour. Now and again, with a Russian trick of unexpectedness, the story plunges into tragedy. The sense of agony, never very far behind the gallant humour, breaks out into an unforgettable picture of men, women and children sacrificed to war.

Madame Fedorova has won a prize with this book. The Committee were lucky to find a first novel of so much worth.



TWO INDISPENSABLE WORKS OF REFERENCE PUBLISHED IN DESPITE OF THE "BLITZ": *Who's Who* for 1941 is bigger and fatter than ever. This year's issue is the ninety-third; it appears in its now familiar red buckram binding and is priced at 65s. nett. The present issue comprises nearly 3,500 pages, beautifully printed, and consisting of thousands of biographies of the famous and the near-famous. In these days of war and international complications, *Who's Who* is more indispensable than ever. *Whitaker's* for 1941 has come out as usual, despite the serious difficulties caused by the fire "blitz" of last December; whilst the volumes were being machined, bombs plastered the premises of the printers, causing a delay in publication. Then, in the Second Fire of London, the home from which *Whitaker* has been issued for nearly three-quarters of a century was destroyed, causing a second postponement. Nevertheless, the 1941 edition is now out, and of greater value than ever. The complete edition consists of nearly 1,000 pages and costs 10s. nett; there is also an abridged edition of 704 pages which costs only 5s. nett

There isn't an eccentric character in Mr. Lloyd Douglas's INVITATION TO LIVE (Peter Davies. 8s.), except perhaps an old lady who only appears, through her will, in which she left her great-grand-daughter half a million dollars with the proviso that that young lady should, on the first Sunday subsequent to her graduation from college, go and listen to a sermon at Trinity Cathedral, Chicago.

The rest of them we recognise as perfectly normal types with whom we have been made familiar through American fiction and the movies. Even the wise old Dean Harcourt, whose Sunday morning sermon starts the lovely nit-wit of a heroine off on a pollyanna-ing crusade, have we not seen him a hundred times on the screen?

Half a million dollars was a good enough inducement to secure the attendance of any co-educated flibbertygibbit at a sermon addressed to three thousand people. Perhaps she wasn't surprised to find it being addressed to *her*. The feelings of the other 2,999 are not recorded. Of course, she has to go and call on the Dean, and the Dean is very wise, sits her down to a square meal, and tells Miss Barbara Beckenridge exactly where she gets off

Or, rather, where her friends get off. Not one of them is worth a damn. She must go out among *real* people: people, that is, without half a million dollars. So off she goes to a department store and rigs herself out like any working gal. Sally, who served her, wanted to be an actress. Sure enough, Sally goes to Hollywood.

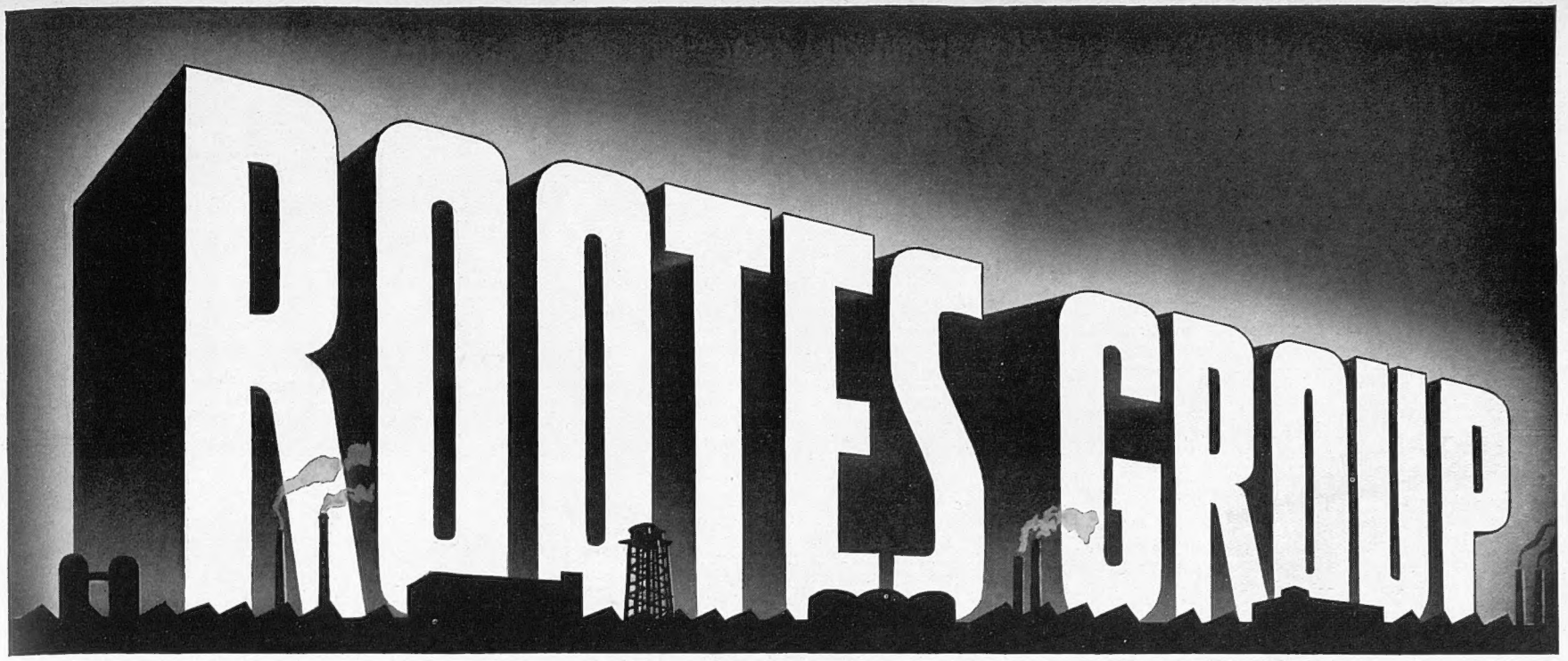
Close to the soil Barbara must get Out to Nebraska to work for the rugged, but golden-hearted Andy Wendell and his very capable and motherly wife.

Then there is Lee Richardson, who chooses his supposed death by accident in a Californian flood also to escape from the burden of the affluence and security of a banker's life. Strangely enough he also fetches up at Andy Wendell's farm. At this point romance rears its lovely head. But, of course, the marriage bells have to be delayed for the Testing Time of Barbara and Lee, during which all sorts of other characters have to be introduced in order to be helped on their several ways. Dean Harcourt, meanwhile, has a high old time. He certainly knows his onions.

All of which is so slick and plausible that you can't believe a word of it. No, not even in the Dean.

The works of Mr. Lloyd Douglas enjoy an enormous circulation on two continents.

MR. ARTHUR BRYANT MARRIES THE RAJAH OF SARAWAK'S NIECE: Miss Anne Brooke is a niece of the "White Rajah of Sarawak": she has just married, at Hemel Hempstead Register Office, Mr. Arthur Bryant, well known as a historian of the Stuart and other periods, and as a journalist. Mr. Bryant's weekly article in *The Illustrated London News* is a brilliant and scholarly piece of work



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SOME WAR-TIME LONDON SHOWS

"The Blue Goose" at the Comedy—"Dear Brutus" at the Globe

ONE point in favour of *The Blue Goose*, the somewhat baffling entertainment at the Comedy Theatre, is that it brought back to the stage Miss Iris Hoey, whose genius shines in farce and who has not been seen in a play of any kind for a longish time. One of my earliest recollections of Miss Hoey is of her performance in a farce at the Vaudeville called *Baby Mine*, and a mighty pleasant one it is. *The Blue Goose* has certain farcical touches at times, but I will not press the comparison. No baby is visible, but Miss Hoey appeared as the chattering, feckless mother of two grown-up and very matter-of-fact daughters, one of whom elopes in the last act with the owner of a small boat which is nearly wrecked, while the other is engaged to be married to a comic little mayor who, it seems, had been a jockey but had become an undertaker. As a side issue is an amateur performance of *The Mikado*; this we do not actually see (I rather wish we had), but there are traces of it from time to time, one of the most acceptable of them being Miss Hoey's amusing efforts at rehearsing "Three Little Maids from School Are We" amid domestic and other distractions.

THE RETURN OF TWO FAVOURITES: Billy Merson and Iris Hoey, the two well-known geniuses of comedy, are to be seen together in the new farce, *The Blue Goose*, at the Comedy Theatre. Mr. Merson plays the part of the prospective bridegroom of one of Miss Hoey's two daughters

Farces—and I suppose that is the label for it—have been made of stranger and more incongruous material than this. But, in spite of some bright lines, *The Blue Goose* waddled much too slowly, and not, to my possibly uncharitable way of thinking, nearly comically enough. And why not more of Mr. Billy Merson? I have laughed myself nearly ill over Mr. Merson in great whales of parts in musical comedy and pantomime, and I am prepared to bet that had this first-rate little comedian been given something to get his teeth into, the afternoon would have been a merrier one.

AN ALL-STAR REVIVAL: *Dear Brutus*, by J. M. Barrie, which is playing to packed houses at the Globe Theatre. A brilliant array of stars form the cast of this play. In the picture are seen, from left to right: Nora Swinburne, Roger Livesey, Zena Dare and Ursula Jeans

"Dear Brutus."—One point about the stage in war-time is that you get your eminent players gathered in the same place instead of being scattered about at various theatres. Which in cold and wintry weather is certainly an advantage. The "all-star" revival of *Dear Brutus* at the Globe is certainly brilliant so far as the cast is concerned, though not, I think, more brilliant in this respect than the original production. If the public appreciation of really good acting is as keen as it used to be—and I am convinced that it is, if indeed it is not keener—here is a splendid feast. I congratulate that admirable actor, Mr. John Gielgud, on his tact and good sense in what might have been the intolerable whimsicality of the magic forest episode, as I do also that promising youngster, Miss Muriel Pavlow, as his "daughter-who-might-have-been" (and who might have been so terrible). Mr. Leon Quartermaine, as the elderly gentleman in a white suit who prances and dances in and out of the trees playing a tin whistle, Miss Ursula Jeans, always a delicious actress, Mr. Roger Livesey (apparently the double of an eminent critic) and Miss Nora Swinburne were among a team well worthy of all-stardom.

A New Ballet.—London is very ballet-conscious just now and the production of a novelty at the New Theatre, where the Sadler's Wells company are enjoying a successful season, is something of an event, particularly since it has been devised by Mr. Frederick Ashton. *The Wanderer* has for its musical accompaniment Schubert's Piano Sonata of that name. But it has wandered a long, long way from Schubert, whom its quaint antics would, I fancy, have surprised a good deal. This belongs to the "Dante Sonata" and "Symphonie Fantastique" family of ballet, in which the dancers rush about the stage in frenzied groups, fall down in panting heaps, and do everything with the utmost vigour. Why they do it I cannot tell. If the meaning of *The Wanderer* is a mystery, there is no doubt about the brilliance of the performers, headed by that fine comedian, Mr. Robert Helpmann.

PHILIP PAGE

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In Quest of Good Hotels

By ASHLEY COURTENAY

I MUST again emphasise the necessity of readers checking up on hotels I have written about, prior to visiting them. Only recently I recommended readers to the Langham Hotel when they were visiting London, and my article was hardly in print when it was officially disclosed that the Langham had been the victim of enemy action which had resulted in it being temporarily closed.

At the same time, my remarks as regards the stability of the Langham still hold good, for the passer-by will still see the Langham standing four-square, although the downstair windows have been bricked up as a safeguard against further blast. The Bolivar Bar, however, which few people realise is part of the Langham, is still open round the corner, and a very popular rendezvous it is.

Another hotel mentioned in these columns which is a war victim, in that it has been commandeered, is the Ship and Castle at St. Mawes. We extend our sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Clarke, for they have only been at the hotel for a twelvemonth, and had built up a very good clientele.

Another hotel casualty is that really lovely country house, Holnicote, at Alleford, near Minehead. It has been badly damaged by fire, although incendiary bombs were not in this case responsible. Holnicote was in the first rank of country-house hotels, and we hope that they may soon be able to reopen their doors.

I have received a number of letters recently on the subject of tipping, and I was particularly reminded of the subject last week when a reader told me that a certain hotel had quoted terms plus a service charge of 10 per cent. "Was this fair?" he asked me. In general my reply is, yes, because the staff of hotels depend on and expect tips. Staff difficulties are very real these days, and it is obvious that if a waiter is not looked after properly by the visitors, he will look out for a job at some other hotel where there is more likelihood of better tips. Hotels of the residential type have a bad reputation amongst staff for the inadequacy of tipping, and as most hotels these days tend to be residential in character, hotel managements are more and more adopting the scheme of adding 10 per cent. in lieu of tips. In practice this works out very well, as the staff know exactly what they are getting a week and visitors are not placed in that awkward position of wondering who to tip and how much to tip. On the other hand, I am inclined to think that the percentage charge could be varied according to the class and size of hotel. In a first-class hotel of the fully licensed type, there is naturally a higher degree of service. For example, at the Redcliffe Hotel at Paignton where I was staying, the ten percentage added is in keeping with the class of hotel. There is a head-waiter, one's table waiter, varied waiters who serve teas and drinks in the lounges. Then there are the chambermaid, the hall porter, the assistant porter, the night porter, and the chef and his staff behind the scenes. But in a small hotel of the residential type, 5 per cent. either added to the bill or distributed personally is adequate, whereas the participants are generally limited to a waitress, a chambermaid, the cook and the porter-cum-boots. It is a pity that more hotels of the smaller type do not add this percentage, as individual tipping is far from adequate.

"There is more room in the front of the train." I am reminded of this peace-time holiday cry when people write to me still hoping to find room at crowded places such as Torquay, Cheltenham, and Bath. It is curious how difficult it is to persuade people to go a little farther on to make sure of comfort. There are plenty of places farther West where there is plenty of room without any overcrowding. Here are some of them. On the westward side of Plymouth from close to Looe is a sunny, straggling seaside village called Downderry. Here is a most admirably run little guest-house called the Wide Sea, where, for 3½ guineas a week, no more, no less, one can live as sumptuously as war conditions allow. I rather think that Miss W. M. Eliott has had her original house taken over, but it is the person, not the house, that matters, and if Miss Eliott moved to the North Pole I believe she could still exercise her ideas on warmth, comfort and good cooking.

And although I have mentioned it before, I am glad to repeat that there is still room at the Boscarn Hotel at Looe. Mrs. Burlingham does not allow war-time difficulties to interfere with her reputation for making people comfortable. Looe, too, is, in itself, as attractive as Seaton, Exmouth, or Budleigh Salterton, Devon, all of which are full. What does an hour or two's extra journey matter if you are thinking of settling in for the duration? There is room, too, at the Hydro Hotel at Falmouth, and what a pleasant and comfortable hotel it is for winter residence. It is as safe at Falmouth as anywhere, and a good deal safer than many places. Write to Miss Row, of the Hydro Hotel, who can soon make you safe-minded.

I expect there is still room, too, at the Budock Vean Hotel, which nestles on the banks of the Helford River, about six miles from Falmouth and eight from Helston. A grand little place if ever there was one, though I should like it reserved entirely for those on "leave" or for those who are able to get respite for a few days from the nightly "blitz" on our industrial towns.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

To W. A. W., Crewe.—An hotel where they do aim at avoiding permanent visitors so as to make room for people like yourself who deserve and can enjoy your short leave is The Plough at Cheltenham. An old coaching inn, brought bang up to date, it still has a healthy "in and out" trade. It is a cheery spot with its busy grill-room and cocktail bar. A comfortable spot, too, with its restful lounges and pleasant bedrooms. Write to Miss Wait, tell her you are coming on leave and she will do her best.

Mr. Ashley Courtenay is always pleased to advise "Sphere" readers of hotels, both large and small, known to him personally. Letters, accompanied by a 2½d. stamp for reply, should be addressed to him, c/o the Editor, THE SPHERE, *32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4. Personal and telephone inquiries, however, cannot be accepted.*

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